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SPECIAL

Magnus Carlsen and **Sergey Karjakin** annotate key encounters

Interview Sergey Karjakin:
'I always wanted to become World Champion'

Carlsen - Karjakin

New York, November 2016

Games, views, stats, predictions

NEW IN CHESS magazine

SPECIAL OFFER

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Why not?

Matches for the World Championship fascinate us more than any other chess event. They are the milestones in the history of our game and create drama that we still talk about many years later. On the eve of the match in New York the prevailing mood is that Magnus Carlsen is the odds-on favourite. He is the better player and his score against Sergey Karjakin is further testimony to his dominance.

But there are no dead certainties when the highest title is at stake. Matches tend to bring out the best in the Challenger, as they are unique opportunities. Before his match against Kasparov in London in 2000, Vladimir Kramnik told me that he happily would play for free (which was not really necessary) and I vividly remember how I looked at him in amazement as we had lunch in a London gentlemen's club. After months of physical training he looked sharp as a knife and determined to execute his strategy that was borrowed from the Czech national ice-hockey team: keep your opponent from scoring and mercilessly exploit your own chances. As we all know, Kramnik let Kasparov hit his head against the Berlin Wall and took the title with two powerful counterpunches.

Sergey Karjakin seems to be perfectly at ease in his new role. He won both the Baku World Cup and the Candidates Tournament in Moscow and now he has nothing to lose. The Challenger knows himself surrounded by an experienced team led by Yury Dokhoian and gets all the support he can dream of from the Russian Chess Federation. Apparently the budget for his preparation is one million euros. His final training camp he had in Florida, from where he tweeted a photo alongside Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, one of the friends he can rely on. When he is asked if he believes he has a chance against Carlsen, Karjakin's answer is simple: 'Why not?'

Of course, the World Champion also has a team working for him and no doubt his training camp in the Caribbean was everything he could have hoped for. But then again, he has had luxurious training camps before and he may find it tougher to muster all the motivation required to defeat an opponent he is supposed to beat.
Or will the Norwegian have no such worries and simply continue to play great chess, just as he has done for most of 2016? Well, why not?

We hope this digital special will get you in the mood for the clash in New York. There is a lot to enjoy. Both Carlsen and Karjakin have been regular contributors to New In Chess for many years. Using the interactive chessviewer you can play through games that they have annotated for our pages.
Or games as they appeared in New In Chess with comments by experts such as Carlsen's first trainer Simen Agdestein and Loek van Wely. In a preview, exclusively written for this edition, Jan Timman gives his take on the match. And there is a revealing interview with Karjakin on his rivalry with Carlsen illustrated with fantastic photos.

All great stuff that will give you a taste of New In Chess. And if you're not a subscriber yet, you are more than welcome to join readers from 116 countries around the world.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam
Editor-in-Chief

‘My dream has always been to become World Champion’

The fight for the World Championship has been on his mind ever since he became the youngest grandmaster in history at the age of 12 years and 7 months. With his win at the Candidates’ tournament in Moscow, 26-year-old Sergey Karjakin (finally!) obtained the right to play for the world title. An apt moment, **DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM** thought, to show the Challenger some photos and take a stroll down memory lane.

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Moscow 2002

This was the first time I saw you, in Moscow in 2002. You were 12 years old and you had just become the youngest GM in history. Sitting next to you is Kateryna Lagno, 16 days 'older' than you. No doubt your dream, or the dream of the people around you, was to become World Champion. The youngest ever perhaps. How long did you think you'd need to get the highest title?

'About my future I was very confident. I was completely sure that I would be World Champion soon. No doubts (laughs). My plan was to be there at 16. But once I was 16, I thought 18, and then when I was 18, I realized that I still had to learn things. I was thinking like this because I was progressing and increasing my rating very fast, and I believed that this would be forever, that I would win so easily. Of course I was wrong. I underestimated the level of the strong guys. Maybe the first time I realized this was when I won the second group in Wijk aan Zee in 2005. This was an excellent achievement and the following year, when I turned 16, I played in the top group. In the first round I lost to Vishy Anand with White. I was very disappointed, because I felt I was killed without having been given a single chance. The rest of the tournament I played well, but I had come to understand that I had to improve.'

Wijk aan Zee 2005

The next famous photo was taken in Wijk aan Zee in 2005. You've just won the B-Group of the Corus Chess Tournament and qualified for next year's top group. You won with 9½ from 13. Magnus Carlsen, less than a year younger than you, but also born in 1990, finished in 7th place (7/13) and Alejandro Ramirez from Costa Rica (born in 1988 but also already a GM) finished in last place.
At the closing I asked the three of you to pose for this photo

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and the deal was that in 10 years' time we hoped to take a photo again and see where the three of you had ended up by then. What did you think at the time about the future of the three of you?

'Honestly speaking, I didn't consider Alejandro to be very dangerous. He could be a very decent chess player, that's for sure, but I never felt that he had the power like Magnus or Radjabov or Nakamura. As for Magnus, of course it was clear from the very beginning that he was a great talent. But still I didn't expect him to develop so fast; that was a surprise. Objectively I think I was stronger than Magnus maybe till I was 17. In 2006 I was still stronger, but we were more or less becoming equal. Till January 2006 I considered myself to be stronger than him. We had almost the same rating, maybe there was a two-point difference, but then it was very unpleasant for me that I was not invited to Wijk aan Zee or Linares. While I was sitting at home, he was playing there. He didn't do so great in Wijk aan Zee, but he did well in Linares. He was basically improving tournament by tournament, while I didn't have these possibilities. That was his big advantage.'

Amsterdam 2006

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Here we are on one of the Amsterdam canals during the first NH tournament in 2006, Rising Stars vs. Experience. Magnus looks clearly younger than you, but he had the best score of the Rising Stars (half a point ahead of you) and qualified for the prestigious Amber Rapid and Blindfold tournament in Monaco in 2007.

'Of course I was disappointed, but actually he played a good tournament, while I was making too many draws. Also I was very angry with Ruslan Ponomariov, my coach, because I had the feeling that he was doing everything wrong. Normally speaking a coach should stimulate and encourage you, but he was doing just the opposite, telling me how badly I was playing and all the things I was doing wrong. Even if I won, he wouldn't say that I had played a good game. This was too much for me and I was very angry. Our friendship ended later, but I felt that there he didn't do his job very well. As for Magnus, I still felt he was very talented, but I also was a very decent player. I only started to get this feeling that he was stronger when he started to win everything in 2007. When he shot up to almost 2800. Then his results and rating were already better than mine.

'Yes, we got along well. But our relationship was always fine. Maybe he was angry sometimes when he lost, and of course I was not happy when I lost to him. That's normal. Actually, we always discussed our games independent of the result. I have no problems with him.'

Wijk aan Zee 2009

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This photo was taken in Wijk aan Zee in 2009, one of the highlights in your career. Magnus, not daring to watch your game against King Loek (which ended in a draw), finished in 5th place, one point behind you, although at that point he was rated 70 points higher than you (2776-2706).

'Honestly speaking, I don't remember my game against Loek van Wely at all (laughs). I was just happy to play a good tournament and I was not thinking about Magnus. It was a key moment in my life, as I was about to change my federation (from the Ukrainian Chess Federation to the Russian – DJtG). I had other things on my mind.'

Wijk aan Zee 2010

Which takes us to the next photo, taken in Wijk aan Zee in 2010. By that time Magnus was the youngest number one in the world with a 2810 rating. He wins the tournament and also defeats you. You are rated 2720, the gap has grown. Do you remember whether you believed you could still challenge him one day?

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'Yeah, actually I always had this feeling. It was basically all about me. I had the feeling that I had to improve my play. Actually, 2010 was a good year for me. After Wijk aan Zee I played a few very good tournaments, and at the end of the year my rating was something like 2765. I improved a lot. Of course this game was unpleasant, but I always had the feeling that I could do better. It's always the journalists that ask me what I think about Magnus Carlsen, what did you think about him five years ago or ten, but I was always looking at myself. And it's not only Magnus, there are many other players. There always were Aronian, Radjabov, Nakamura and other strong players.

'I think the move to Russia was the critical change in my life, because from 2003 till 2009 I didn't have any support. I was inviting coaches and paying them with my own money; it was very complicated and difficult. When I moved to Moscow, it was not only about the support of the federation, but the main thing was that I got the possibility to work with strong coaches. When I started to work with Motylev and Dokhoian, within one year I became a top-10 player, which was all because of this change. When you have a few constant coaches with whom you always work, this is a good thing. I had many weaknesses in my play and there was basically nobody who could help me or show me what I was doing wrong, but they helped me a lot, which was very much needed. And they are still helping me.'

Moscow 2010

Surrounded by spectators, you are playing Magnus at the World Blitz Championship in Moscow 2010. Magnus failed to defend his 2009 title (he came third, Aronian won), but I seem to remember that the two of you had a good time, going out after the tournament and drinking B52's. Or was that after one of the Tal Memorials?

'If I am not mistaken, as you're talking about B52's, it was not in 2010, but in 2011. B52 is a famous Russian drink based on vodka, a cocktail, and before you drink it you set fire to it. I think he enjoyed the first couple he had... I wouldn't say that Magnus is my best friend, but we have completely normal relations. We talk and discuss things, not only about chess. He can be very funny. I cannot name any names, but I remember how we would call a player or a manager and make some offers, just for fun. I gave him some numbers he didn't know, gave him a phone and he made the calls. That was in the middle of the night and the next day I got some complaints because these people understood that he had gotten their numbers from me.'

Bazna 2011

The cover of New In Chess 2011/5, showing the two of you as old buddies after you shared first prize in Bazna, Romania. Was that another sign that you could compete with him?

'Yes, I was in good form and in fact I had some chances in the last round, when I was facing Magnus with black. I was slightly better, but then I blundered something and then I decided to repeat moves. But still, I scored plus-3 without a single loss, and sharing first with Magnus was a very good result. I thought that everything was in my hands and that I could challenge him at some point, why not?'

COVER PHOTO: PETER DOGGERS

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Wijk aan Zee 2012

At the 2012 Tata Steel tournament you (2769) beat Magnus (2835) with the black pieces and you happily showed your win in the press room. Did this win have a special meaning for you?

'Maybe a little bit, because this was my first victory against him when he was already very strong. I felt that I should have won at least one game against him before. Several times I had great chances and I didn't win a single one of those games, so it finally happened. I was happy, but of course it didn't come as a total surprise.'

Stavanger 2013

Stavanger 2013. In the first edition of Norway Chess you take first place ahead of Magnus, Anand and Nakamura. Did topping him on his home turf feel special?

'This was a very special tournament for me, right from the beginning. I had a fantastic start, winning my first four games. It was completely amazing, but then the fifth game was one of the most disappointing games in my life. Of course you can lose to Magnus, also with White, but the way I lost was highly unpleasant, because I had a much better and totally risk-free position. I could continue to play without any risk, but I thought that I should try to win. I took a poisoned pawn, still had some chances, but he played really well after that. Still I was very happy that I won that tournament.'

Stavanger 2014

And the following year, in 2014, you won Norway Chess again! Magnus remained a good sport, but it must have hurt. At that point you had just married again and the future looked bright. Did you feel everything was going as it should go?

'Yes, I was completely fine. I was very happy with my wife and I didn't think too much about what was going to happen in my chess world. But I was already very confident, because before Norway I played well in the Candidates' tournament.'

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Moscow 2016

The last photo is from the Candidates' tournament in Moscow, where following your win in the Baku World Cup, you won again. In both tournaments you survived scary moments and showed nerves of steel. What do these two victories say about your current strength? Have you grown as a player in the past year?
'Yes, I think it shows that I am getting stronger. I am on the right track and I think I am still improving. I don't see why I should not improve more for the match. As Pavel Eljanov said, I played badly in the World Cup, but I managed to win. I played better in the Candidates' tournament and I managed to win, and I have to play even better in a match against Magnus, but from my point of view I can do it. I will surely try to show my best, but we will see who will win.'

Then one of the first decisions after you won the Candidates' was to skip Norway Chess. How did you decide that?

'Before the Candidates' I was obviously going to play, because I had signed the contract, but after the tournament I realized that I was completely exhausted. I didn't have any energy, nothing, and I just wanted to sleep and have a rest. And I had to give thousands of interviews, which I still have, and it was clear that I would not be able to prepare properly. I felt mentally depleted, completely exhausted. I am very sorry about that, but that is how it was. The past few nights I have only slept six or seven hours, not because I don't want to sleep more, but because there are so many commitments. Interest in Russia is huge and I am using this time to speak to people so that chess gets even more popular again.'

Some people will also suggest some sort of vengeance, because despite being a two-time winner you were not invited to Norway Chess last year. Did that play a role?
'Well, maybe 10 per cent, but 90 per cent of the reason was my tiredness.'

You mean it makes you feel slightly less guilty?
'Yes, yes (laughs).'

At the closing you dedicated your victory to Russia and Crimea, where you were born. Are you ready to bring back the world title to Russia?
'That is my dream. And of course I want to dedicate it to my family, to my wife and to my son. This is our victory, not only mine. And it is of course very much about my coaches, who helped me a lot. My dream has always been to become World Champion and I have a chance now. I will play against Magnus, why not? It didn't go like I thought when I was 12, but still I am very happy that I have this chance. But I don't think this has to change my attitude towards him. Some people try to tell me that now he has to be my enemy, but take a look at chess history and analyse the match between Botvinnik and Tal. Before the match Botvinnik was persistently trying to project Tal as his worst enemy, while Tal was doing the exact opposite and said he had no problems with him. And I think Botvinnik was very angry because of that. I mean, it depends on the person and as I have no problems with Magnus, I would not know why he should be my enemy.' ■

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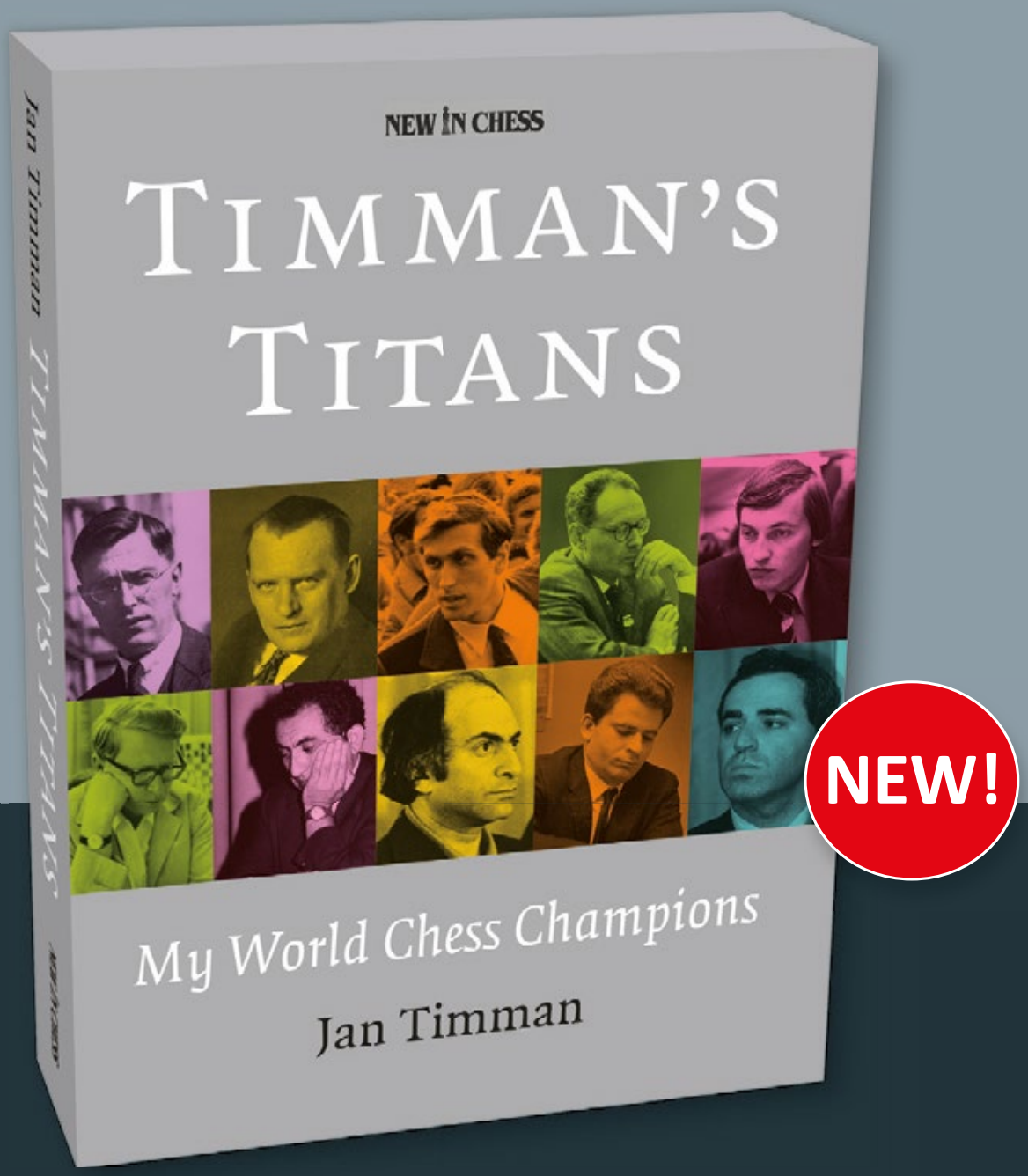
Fascinating stories and great chess!



Jan Timman portrays ten World Chess Champions that played an important role in his life and career. He not only presents his insider views of these chess giants, but his book is also an evocation of countless fascinating episodes in chess history, including many revelations about the great champions.

Each portrait is completed by a selection of illustrative games, annotated in Timman's trademark lucid style. Always to the point, sharp and with crystal-clear explanations, Timman shows the highs and lows from the games of the champions, including the most memorable games he himself played against them.

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In the first Norway Chess Tournament in Stavanger in 2013, Sergey Karjakin took first place but lost the game against Magnus Carlsen.

Carlsen-Karjakin *who will win?*

Over the past twelve years, Magnus Carlsen and Sergey Karjakin have played 21 classical games. The Norwegian is leading 4-1 with 16 draws. **JAN TIMMAN** looks at the strengths (and weaknesses) of the Champ and his Challenger on the eve of their 12-game title match in New York.

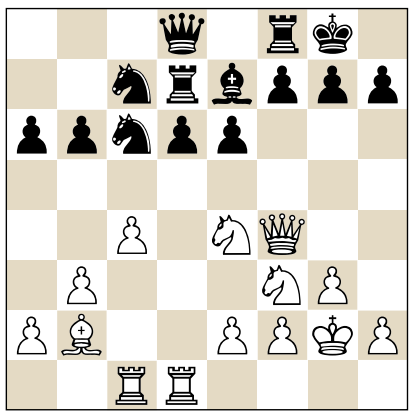
Traditionally, the Chess World Champion is a player of middle years who is challenged by a representative of the new generation. If the Champion is beaten, the changing of the guards usually brings about the end of an era. The Emanuel Lasker era was ended by Raul Capablanca, who himself was succeeded by Alexander Alekhine. The other way around is also possible: Viktor Kortchnoi and Vishy Anand have shown that you can still become a Challenger in your 40s. For the Challenger to have been born in the same year as the reigning World Champion, however, as is the case with Magnus Carlsen and Sergey Karjakin, is rare. The only other time this happened was with Veselin Topalov and Vladimir Kramnik in Elista, 10 years ago, a match that gained notoriety through the pettifoggery of Silvio Danailov, Topalov's manager.

Topalov and Kramnik had also risen together as young stars – in the 1990s – but they were over 30 when they battled for the highest honour. Carlsen and Karjakin are a few years younger. Both of them score high on the list of youngest GMs of all time: Karjakin holds the record, since he was only 12 years and 7 months old when he was made a GM. Carlsen took a bit longer and earned the title at the age of 13 years, 4 months and 26 days. At the time, in 2004, it was generally expected that they would duel for the highest title someday.

Karjakin actually developed faster than Carlsen during those years. In the traditional Dortmund tournament, he drew twice with Kramnik. Carlsen had drawn with Garry Kasparov earlier that year, but that had been in a rapid game. Not everyone was impressed by Karjakin as a young star, though. During the 2005 European Championship in Gothenburg, the Dutch team had to prepare against Ukraine, and there was a chance I would have to play against Karjakin (who still played for his native country then). 'You'll easily beat him,' Sergey Tiviakov observed, rather to the surprise of the other team members. When I asked him to explain himself, Tiviakov referred me to a game Karjakin-Ivanchuk in which White had got completely lost strategically. 'He hasn't a clue about strategy,' he said harshly.

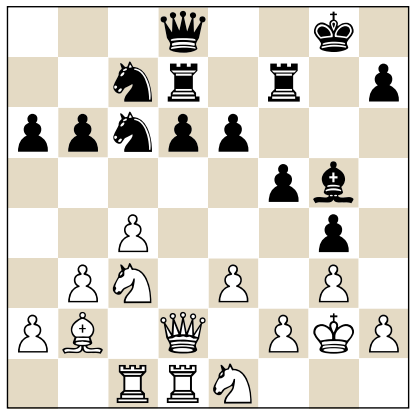
In the end I didn't play Karjakin in Gothenburg, and I doubt that I would have beaten him easily, but Tiviakov still had a point. With Karjakin you often thought that he had studied certain systems very well and scored his successes with those. It was precisely in this area that Carlsen started diverging from him. The young Norwegian was far more at home in all kinds of different systems and depended far less on his knowledge of the openings. In this he resembled another great Scandinavian player: Bent Larsen – except that the great Dane could be unrecognizable on an off-day. Carlsen managed to develop into a top player with a flawless technique.

I believe Carlsen made his definitive breakthrough in 2008, when he beat Kramnik for the first time in the traditional Wijk aan Zee tournament.

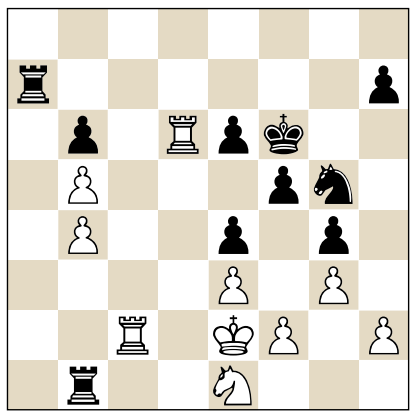


Kramnik-Carlsen
Wijk aan Zee 2008
position after 17.♘f3

White seems to have built up some nice pressure, but now Carlsen stirs from his cramped position and manages to free himself completely.
17...f5!
Forcing back the centrally positioned knight.
18.♘c3 g5!
And now the queen.
19.♕d2 g4 20.♘e1 ♗g5 21.e3 ♖ff7

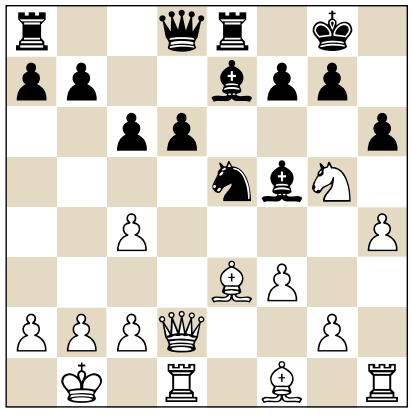


After taking these important strategical steps Black continues his manoeuvrings. The computer still sees some plus for White in this position, but I think that Kramnik would also have preferred to be Black. Carlsen convincingly won the game.
22.♔g1 ♘e8 23.♘e2 ♘f6 24.♘f4 ♕e8 25.♕c3 ♖g7 26.b4 ♘e4 27.♕b3 ♖ge7 28.♕a4 ♘e5 29.♕xa6 ♖a7 30.♕b5 ♕xb5 31.cxb5 ♖xa2 32.♖c8+ ♔f7 33.♘fd3 ♗f6 34.♘xe5+ dxe5 35.♖c2 ♖ea7 36.♔g2 ♘g5 37.♖d6 e4 38.♗xf6 ♔xf6 39.♔f1 ♖a1 40.♔e2 ♖b1



41.♖d1 ♖xb4 42.♘g2 ♖xb5 43.♘f4 ♖c5 44.♖b2 b5 45.♔f1 ♖ac7 46.♖bb1 ♖b7 47.♖b4 ♖c4 48.♖b2 b4 49.♖db1 ♘f3 50.♔g2 ♖d7 51.h3 e5 52.♘e2 ♖d2 53.hxg4 fxg4 54.♖xd2 ♘xd2 55.♖b2 ♘f3 56.♔f1 b3 57.♔g2 ♖c2 0-1

Beating Kramnik is a good yardstick to judge how far a young top player has come along in his career. Anish Giri, for one, hasn't managed it yet. Karjakin beat Kramnik for the first time in 2010.



Karjakin-Kramnik
Moscow 2010
position after 14...h6

This position has arisen from the Russian Defence. If Black withdraws his knight, Black will have an excellent position.

15.♗e2! Karjakin must have prepared this stunning piece offer at home.

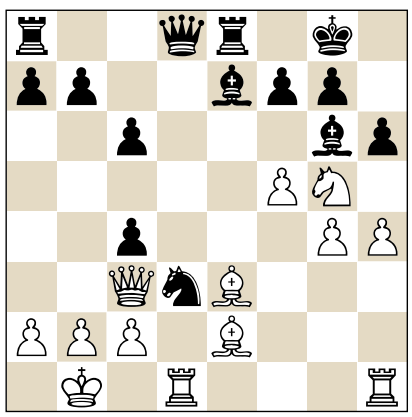
15...d5 Kramnik wisely decides to decline it. The computer does not see any win for White, but the open h-file looks frightening.

16.g4 ♗g6 17.f4 All white kingside pawns are advancing.

17...dxc4 This is the counterplay Kramnik had been aiming for. After the queen swap he would have been fine.

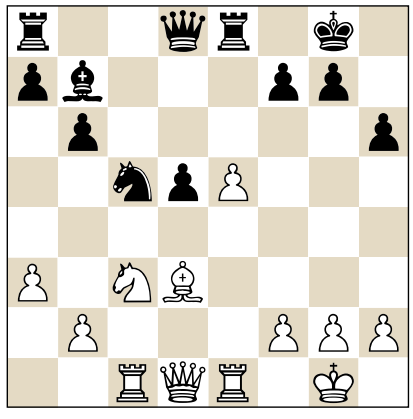
18.♕c3! Refuting Black's counterplay.

18...♘d3 19.f5! One power move after the other. Karjakin won the attack.



19...♗xg5 20.fxg6 ♖xe3 21.gxf7+ ♔f8 22.♕xc4 ♖xe2 23.hxg5 ♕xg5 24.♕xd3 ♕e3 25.♕h7 ♕e4 26.♕g8+ ♔e7 27.♕xg7 ♕xc2+ 28.♔a1 ♖f8 29.♖hf1 ♖d2 30.♖fe1+ ♖e2 31.♕c3 ♔xf7 32.♕f3+ 1-0

Earlier that year, Carlsen had scored his first victory against Karjakin in Wijk aan Zee, after their first five games had been drawn. Two years later, Karjakin had his revenge.



Carlsen-Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2012
position after 16... ♖e8

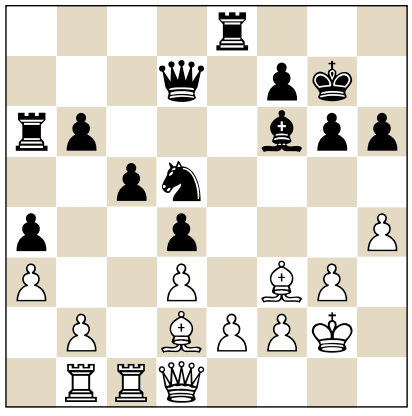
White can retain a slight edge with 17.♘b5 ♘xd3 18.♕xd3 ♗a6 19.♕b3 ♗xb5 20.♕xb5 d4 21.♕d3. Carlsen tries to conjure up a better version of this.

17.f4
Not very effective and paving the way for a blunder.

17...d4 18.♘e4?
An uncharacteristic blunder. The knight should have gone to b5.

18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4 d3
Of course. White cannot take the rook, since this would allow the d-pawn to advance. Black is winning. For a full analysis of this game see Karjakin's extensive notes elsewhere in this special.

When the two players squared off again the year after, they had played one another 10 times, but without any win for White. It is understandable that Carlsen was anxious to do something about this.



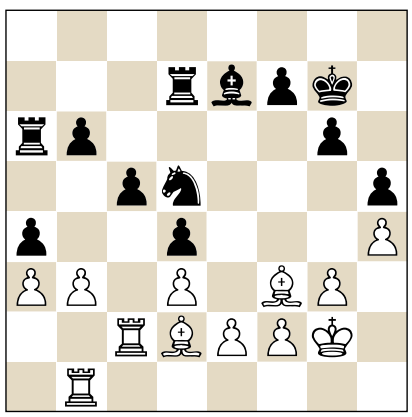
Carlsen-Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2013
position after 28... ♘d5

White doesn't have much of an advantage yet, but this is no problem for Carlsen.

29.♕h1 An amazing but quite solid move. White wants to activate his queen via h3, because he won't be able to do so via the queenside. At the same time, he is aiming for a later queen swap.

29...♗e7 30.♔g1 ♖d8 31.♖c2 ♕e6 32.♕g2 ♖a7 33.♖e1 ♖ad7 34.♔h2 ♖c8 35.♕h3 ♕xh3+ 36.♔xh3 h5 37.♖b1 ♖a8 38.♔g2 ♖a6 39.b3

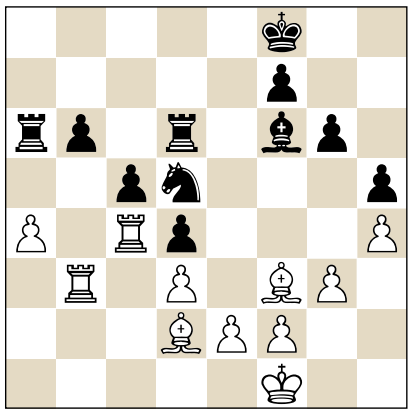
'No one really tipped him as a potential winner of the Candidates' tournament, except for one person: Carlsen.'



Finally, White becomes active, just before the time-control.

39...axb3 40.♖xb3 ♗f6 41.♖c4 ♖d6 42.♔f1 ♔f8 Not a good square for the king, but Black can afford this, because White is not threatening anything yet.

43.a4



43...♘c3? A badly timed action, because the coordination of Black's pieces leaves much to be desired. He should have gone 43...♔g7, after which White would have found it hard to show an advantage.

44.♗f4 ♖e6 45.e3 ♘xa4 46.♗d5 This is the problem. The rook has no good square.

46...♖e7 47.♗d6 b5 48.♗xe7+ ♗xe7 49.♖xb5 ♘b6 50.e4 ♘xc4 51.♖b8+ ♔g7 52.♗xc4 ♖a7 53.f4

Carlsen has successfully rounded off the tactical phase, and he went on to win the endgame with excellent technique.

A few months later, Carlsen beat Karjakin again, in the Norway Chess tournament. But Karjakin won the tournament itself, and the year after he repeated his success. By rights, such brilliant victories should have catapulted Karjakin into the absolute elite, but in 2015 he did not get an invitation for the Grand Chess Tour, undoubtedly because his rating has never been very high in comparison to other players. At this moment, there are 10 top players who have broken the 2800 barrier at some time or another, whereas Karjakin's rating has never gone above 2790, about 100 points short of Carlsen's top rating of 2882 (May 2015).

In 2015, he dropped out of the top-10 altogether. In *After Magnus*, which was published that year, Giri portrays 10 potential successors to Carlsen; Karjakin is not one of them. Grischuk is, which is a bit strange, since he never really was a threat to Carlsen. Later that year, Karjakin won the World Cup, which qualified him for the Candidates' tournament. It wasn't a convincing victory and it didn't yield him much in the way of rating points, but his stamina and nerves of steel caught people's attention.

No one really tipped him as a potential winner of the Candidates' tournament, except for one person: Carlsen. The World Champion praised Karjakin's level-headedness and practical approach, and it was precisely these factors that enabled Karjakin to win. He played his games with unprecedented determination, never throwing away a chance. The nervous tension of the tournament never got to him and he managed to save several hopeless positions.

After the Candidates' tournament the two players played another two games in Bilbao. Carlsen won as White, and the other game finished in a hard-fought draw. This brought their total score to 4-1, with 16 draws. This gives a fair idea of how they measure up. Carlsen has a flawless feel for a great variety of positions, and Karjakin doesn't have much to set against this.

Yet their New York match is not a foregone conclusion. Carlsen has won two World Championship matches against Anand, both apparently convincingly. In Game 6 of the second match, however, he made a horrific blunder. Anand failed to see it and quickly replied. As they say in chess circles, he 'believed' Carlsen, which in this case means that he couldn't believe that Carlsen could make such a blunder. This would not have happened to Karjakin: he would surely have found the relatively simple win. Karjakin will also have chances in the opening. If he manages to lure Carlsen onto sharp theoretical territory – as in his game against Kramnik – the match might light up. But it is also possible that Carlsen will routinely succeed in reaching his favourite strategic middle games. In that case, things will be looking bleak for Karjakin. ■

NEW IN CHESS

Sergey Karjakin rightly remarked that the match in New York will start with the score 0-0, but Magnus Carlsen's win in Bilbao this summer seemed to underpin that the Norwegian will be the clear favourite.

Carlsen – Karjakin: In their own moves

Annotated games by Magnus Carlsen, Sergey Karjakin, Magnus' first coach Simen Agdestein and Loek van Wely

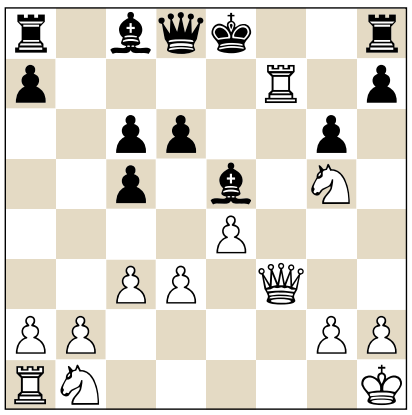
Ever since they burst onto the international chess scene, Magnus Carlsen and Sergey Karjakin have featured prominently in New In Chess. We take you on a small voyage in time with a fine bouquet of ten games as they appeared on our pages.

In 2007 Carlsen and Karjakin played a six-player round-robin blindfold tournament in Bilbao. Former Chinese prodigy Bu Xiangzhi won ahead of Carlsen, Karjakin, Topalov, Judit Polgar and Harikrishna. In the games they played against each other Carlsen and Karjakin both won with Black.

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Bilbao blindfold 2007 (5)
Sicilian Defence, Rossolimo (B30)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 e6 4.♗xc6 bxc6 5.d3 ♘e7 6.♕e2 ♕c7 7.♘g5 e5 8.f4 exf4 9.0-0 ♘g6 10.♕h5 d6 11.♗xf4 ♘xf4 12.♖xf4 g6 13.♕f3 ♗g7 14.♖xf7 ♗d4+ 15.♔h1 ♕d8 16.c3 ♗e5

All this may look pretty unusual for someone who sees the moves for the first time. However, for Carlsen this position was well-known. He prepared the variation for Alexander Grischuk at the 2006 Tal Memorial, and when he didn't get it on the board in their encounter he couldn't resist the temptation to play it in the ensuing blitz tournament. As practically all games of that blitz tournament were lost, Karjakin was unaware of the dangers awaiting him.

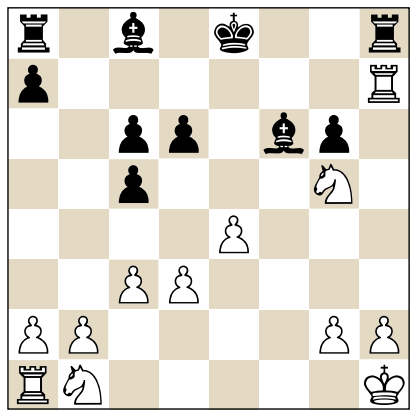


17.♖g7?

This does not solve White's problems. Grischuk didn't find the right move either. He played 17.♘xh7?, and after 17...♗f5 18.♖b7 ♗d7 19.♖xd7 ♔xd7 20.♕f7+ ♕e7 21.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 22.♘g5 ♖xh2+ 23.♔g1 ♖ah8 24.♘f3 ♖h1+ 25.♔f2 ♖c1 26.d4 cxd4 27.cxd4 ♗g7 he had to resign.

The correct move is 17.h4, when after 17...h6 18.♖g7 ♖f8 19.♖f7 ♖h8 20.♖g7 it's a draw by move repetition.

17...♕f6 18.♕xf6 ♗xf6 19.♖xh7



19...0-0!

A magnificent blow that is easy to miss. Black wins a piece and converts without any big problems.

20.♘a3 ♗xg5 21.♖c7 ♖f7 22.♖xc6 ♗f4 23.♘c4 ♗d7 24.♖a6 ♗b5 25.♖a5 ♗xc4 26.dxc4 ♗e5 27.♖d1 ♖af8 28.g3 ♖f2 29.b4 ♗xc3 30.♖xa7 ♗d4 31.♖d7 ♖xa2 32.bxc5 ♖ff2 33.♖d8+ ♔g7 34.♖d7+ ♔h6

And not wanting to wait for the mate, White resigned.

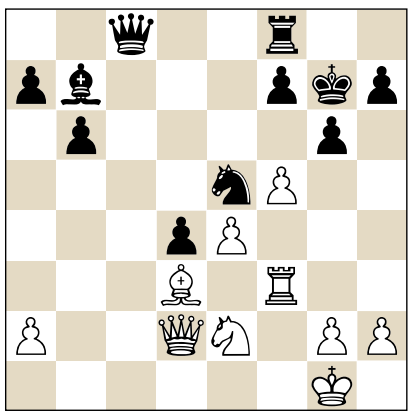
■ ■ ■

In 2008 Carlsen demolished the opposition in Foros, Crimea, with a 8/11 score and a 2881 performance.

Karjakin came third with 6/11 - and wrote the tournament report for New In Chess! He also commented on the last phase of his draw versus Carlsen.

NOTES BY
Sergey Karjakin

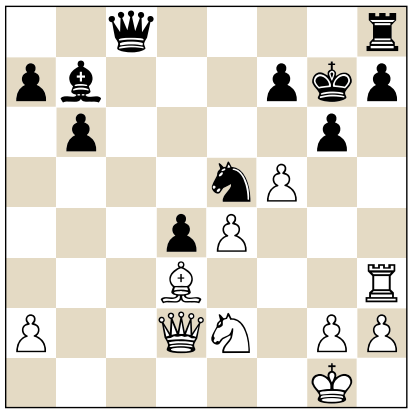
Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Foros 2008



position after 20...♘e5

21.♖h3 ♖h8

Here all the commentators said that 21...h5 would have led to a draw, but after 22.♖xh5 gxh5 23.♕g5+ ♔h7 (23...♘g6?? 24.f6+) 24.♕xh5+ ♔g7 25.♕g5+ ♔h7 26.♕h4+ ♔g8 27.♕g3+! ♔h7 28.♕xe5 Black may be able to hold on, although it would not be easy to decide on this at the board.



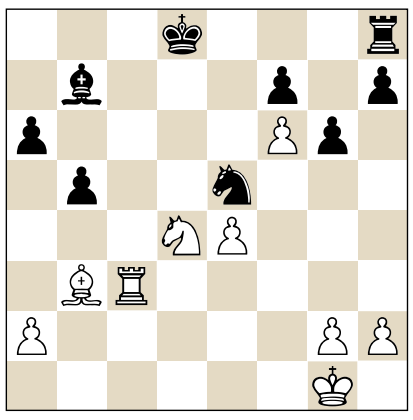
22.f6+

Here I thought for a long time and did not find anything better than to go into an endgame. I was so upset by being unable to find a way of immediately mating Black, that I offered a draw. Besides, I simply thought that the resulting endgame was equal. After the game Jan Gustafsson suggested 22.♕h6+ ♔g8 23.♕h4, but that is a topic for a separate analysis.

22...♔g8

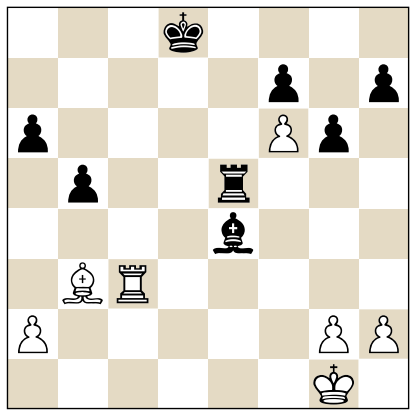
Black declines the offer, but objectively this is an over-estimation of his position.

23.♕h6 ♕f8 24.♕xf8+ ♔xf8 25.♘xd4 ♔e8 26.♗b5+ ♔d8 27.♖c3 a6 28.♗a4 b5 29.♗b3



29...♖e8

Here Magnus offered a draw. Up to here I thought that the position was equal, and so I agreed. Instead of the move played, 29...♔d7! was stronger. However, after the text-move, 29...♖e8, I missed the fact that after 30.♘f3! ♗xe4 (White has some advantage after 30...♘g4 31.♘g5 ♗xe4 32.♗xf7 ♖e5 33.♗e6! ♘xf6 34.♘f7+ ♔e7 35.♘xe5 ♔xe6 36.♘d3) 31.♘xe5 ♖xe5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

White has the simple move 32.♖e3! ♖e8 33.♗xf7 ♖f8, and here he has a choice between 34.♗b3 and 34.♖xe4

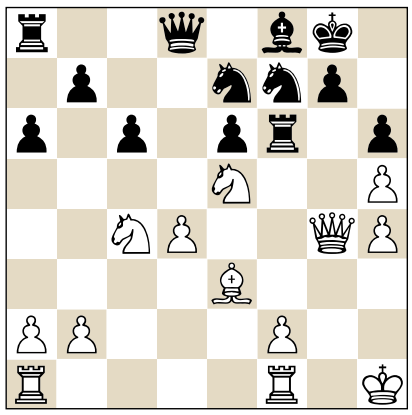
The Karjakin family in Foros: father Alexander, mother Tatyana, Anton and Sergey.

♖xf7 35.♖e6. It is probable that all the same Black can hold the position, but if I had seen the move ♖e3 I would of course have played on.

After the game many accused me of a lack of fighting spirit, but I don't understand at all what fighting spirit has got to do with it, if I did not see ♖e3 and I thought that I was agreeing in accordance with the position.

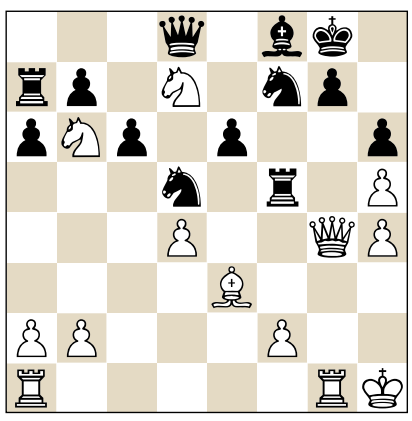
■ ■ ■

In 2009 Sergey Karjakin won his first super-tournament in Wijk aan Zee. Magnus Carlsen finished in fifth place. Their game was a hard-fought draw.

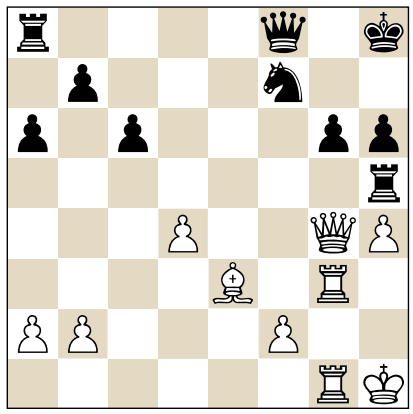


Carlsen-Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2009
position after 25...♘e7

In a position that was hard to assess, Karjakin has just erroneously withdrawn his knight from d5 to e7. Carlsen immediately jumps at the opportunity: **26.♘b6!** With the obvious point that 26...♕xb6 loses to 27.♘d7. **26...♖a7** But after this move Black is also in trouble. **27.♘ed7 ♖f5 28.♖g1 ♘d5**



29.♘xd5? Missing a golden opportunity. He could have struck with 29.♘xf8 ♔xf8 (29...♕xf8 30.♘d7 ♘f6 31.♘xf6+ ♖xf6 32.d5 is also pretty grim) 30.♕xg7+ ♔e7 31.♗xh6, as after 31...♘xb6 32.♗g5+ ♖xg5 33.hxg5 Black might as well resign. **29...♖xd5 30.♘xf8 ♕xf8 31.♖g3 ♖a8 32.♖ag1 ♔h8 33.♕xe6 ♖xh5 34.♕g4 g6**



35.d5? Foregoing another chance. After 35.♕xg6 ♖xh4+ 36.♔g2 the immediate threat of ♕f6+ leaves the black position in tatters, for instance 36...♘d6 37.d5 ♘f5 38.♗c5 ♘e7 39.♕e6 ♖e8 40.♖e1. **35...♘e5**

COVER PHOTO: NEW IN CHESS

36.♗d4 ♕f6 and now Black had the worst behind him, and thanks to a tenacious defence he managed to draw the game after 79 moves.

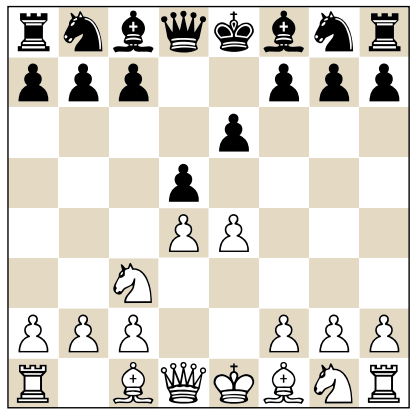
■ ■ ■

In 2010 the tables were turned. Carlsen won Wijk aan Zee and Karjakin finished in sixth place. Carlsen was proud to win the following game.

NOTES BY
Magnus Carlsen

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Wijk aan Zee 2010
French, Steinitz Variation (C11)

1.e4 e6!?
The French Defence. In my younger years I used to consider it at best a second-rate opening, and I once even lost a bet with one of my friends, and as a result had to play 1...e6 in all my black games in a Super-GM tournament. Fortunately my friend was greedy, and took money instead. I believe that both 1...c5 and 1...e5! are better choices, but since I desperately wanted to win this game (I was trailing the leaders Kramnik and Shirov by a point at this stage) I decided to try something new.
2.d4 d5 3.♘c3



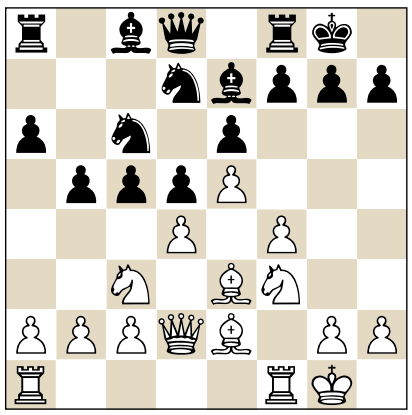
3...♘f6
The other main move here is 3...♗b4, which is rather more controver-

sial. Some think it gives Black good counterplay, while others regard it as a simple positional mistake to give up the bishop too early.

4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 ♗e7

Other options here are the relatively slow 7...a6, or the more concrete 7...cxd4, followed by ...♕b6, or 7...♕b6 immediately, both of which are rated quite highly by Wesley So and his Rybka.

8.♕d2 0-0 9.♗e2 a6 10.0-0 b5

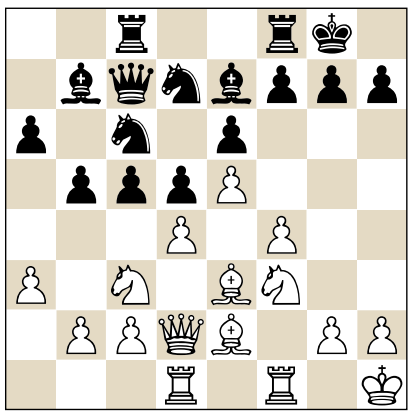


11.♔h1!?

An interesting and quite unusual move. 11.a3 or 11.♘d1 are the normal moves here. The text is actually a quite cunning waiting move, as ...b4 and ...a5/...♗a6 (the normal reply to ♘d1) can now be met by ♘a4, while ...♗b7 (one of several possible replies to a3) can be met by ♘d1. Then Black will probably have to play ...b4 and ...a5/...♗a6 anyway, but with a tempo less.

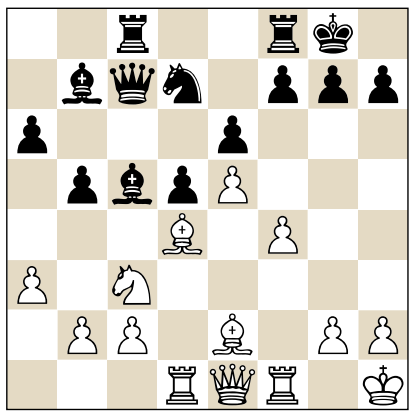
Therefore I decided to be more flexible, and make a more or less useful waiting move.

11...♕c7 12.a3 ♗b7 13.♖ad1 ♖ac8



14.♕e1 A typical manoeuvre. White intends to gradually start an attack on the kingside, which is why I decided to start counterplay in the centre immediately.

14...cxd4 15.♘xd4 ♘xd4 16.♗xd4 ♗c5



17.♕h4?

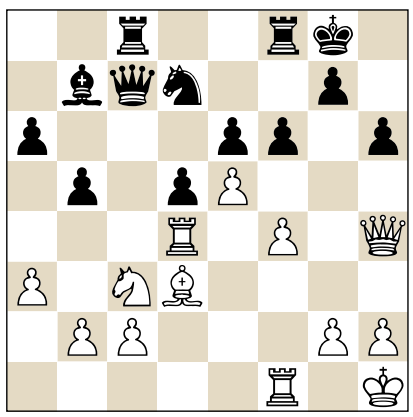
While this move might objectively speaking not deserve a question mark, it was definitely a turning point in the game, as after my reply, Karjakin got very uncomfortable with his position.

17.♕f2 or something similar was required, as the queen needs to have more influence in the centre after I play ...f6, which is bound to happen sooner or later.

17...♗xd4 18.♖xd4 f6! 19.♗d3

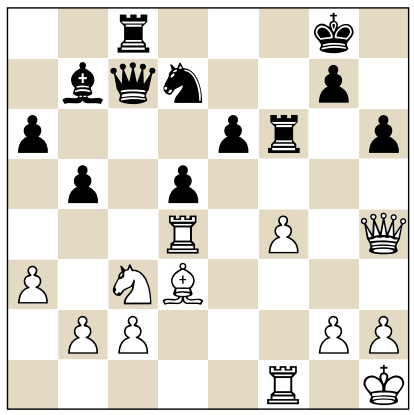
This probably won't help much either, but since it was part of the plan with ♕h4, I will not give it a question mark.

19...h6



20.exf6 20.♕g4 ♕b6! would not help White, while 20.f5 fxe5 21.♖g4 ♘f6 stops any illusions of a white attack.

20...♖xf6 Now it is clear that something has gone wrong for White. The rook on d4 is exposed, f4 is weak, and he will be facing tactical problems with ...e5 quite soon. The 'bad' bishop on b7 is certainly no worse than the white knight, which has dominated it in so many textbook games.

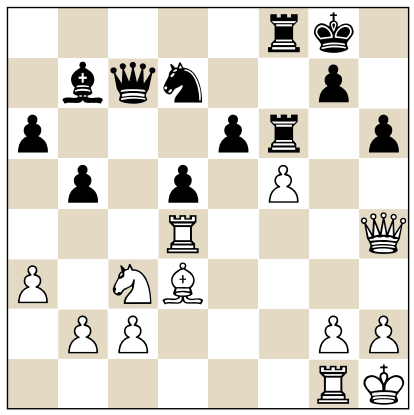


21.f5

21.♖g1 ♖cf8 22.♘e2 e5 23.fxe5 ♘xe5 would not have been much of a relief – the black pieces are just so much more active than their white counterparts here.

21.♕g3 ♖cf8 22.♖f3 ♘b8! leaves White on the brink of disaster.

21...♖cf8 22.♖g1



22...♘c5!

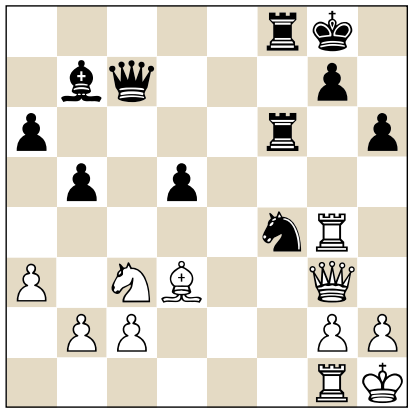
The most energetic approach. The tempting 22...e5 23.♘xd5 ♗xd5 24.♖xd5 ♘b6, trapping the rook, gives White very good drawing chances after 25.♕e4 ♘xd5 26.♕xd5+ ♔h8 27.♖e1.

23.fxe6 ♘xe6 24.♖g4?!

24.♘xd5 ♗xd5 25.♖xd5 ♘f4 26.♖d4 ♕c5 forces White to give up the exchange with 27.♖xf4, as 27.c3 ♘xd3 28.♖xd3 ♕xg1+ 29.♔xg1 ♖f1

is mate. That being said, it would probably have been a better try.

24...♘f4 25.♕g3

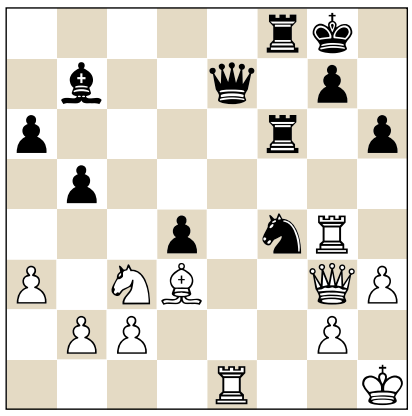


25...♕e7!

The last key move, after which Black is completely winning. The point is to control e2, leaving the white knight without a good square after ...d4 next. The tactical justification, based on a slightly surprising queen sac, is:

26.♖xf4

After this Black will have to make only a couple of good moves to win the game, but White was probably lost in any case, as witness 26.h3 d4 27.♖e1

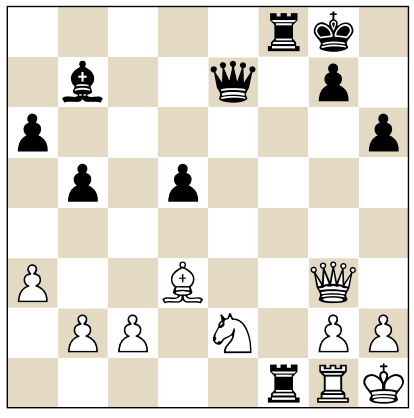


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27...♕xe1+! 28.♕xe1 ♘xd3, and Black will be material up in every line. Alternatively, instead of 27.♖e1, 27.♘e2 ♘xe2 28.♗xe2 ♗c8! wins an exchange, while 27.♘d1 ♗c8 28.♖e1 ♕f7 29.♖h4 ♗b7 30.♖g1 ♘xg2! (30...g5 is also very good, of course) 31.♖xg2 ♖f3 32.♕g4 ♖e8 leaves the uncoordinated white forces defenceless against the threat of 33...♖e1+.

26...♖xf4 27.♘e2 27.♕g6 ♖8f6 28.♕h7+ ♔f7 is obviously not dangerous. **27...♖f1**

27...♖h4, with the idea of 28.♕g6 ♖xh2+, and mate, was tempting, but I could not refute the considerably stronger 28.c3.

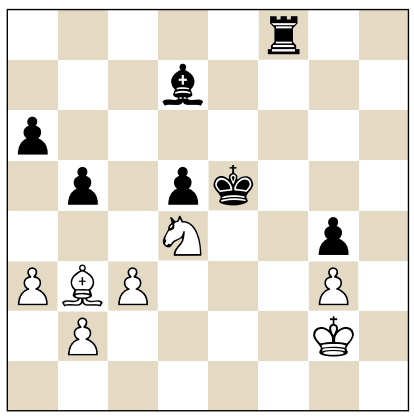


28.♘d4 Now Black can force a queen swap, but 28.h3 ♖xg1+ 29.♔xg1 ♕c5+ 30.♔h2 d4!, finally activating the bishop, was hardly stronger.

28...♖xg1+ 29.♔xg1 ♖e8

With the queens on the board White could perhaps have hoped to resist, but without queens the extra exchange is bound to count, even though the knight on d4 is keeping the position together for the moment.

30.h4 ♕e1+ 31.♔h2 ♕xg3+ 32.♔xg3 ♔f7 33.♔f2 ♔f6 34.g3 ♗c8 35.c3 ♗g4 36.♗c2 g5 37.hxg5+ hxg5 38.♗b3 ♔e5 39.♗c2 ♖f8+ 40.♔g2 ♗d7 41.♘f3+ ♔f6 42.♗b3 g4 43.♘d4 ♔e5



Now the white king is cut off, and the undermining ...a5/...b4 cannot be prevented.

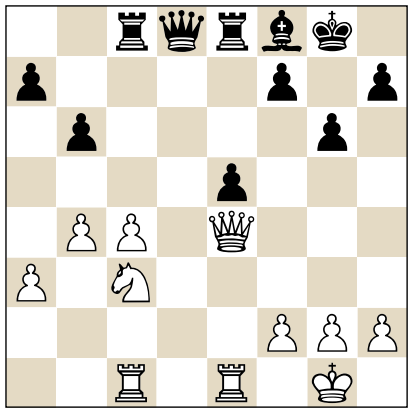
44.♗c2 a5 45.♗d1 ♔e4

White resigned. My best game in Corus 2010!

■ ■ ■

In 2011 Carlsen and Karjakin both reigned supreme in the Kings' Tournament in Romania. Carlsen was declared the winner thanks to a better tiebreak.

After nine rounds Carlsen and Karjakin were sharing the lead, and they were to face each other in the final round – always a nice finale for a tournament. Playing the black pieces, it was Karjakin who got the better side of the draw:



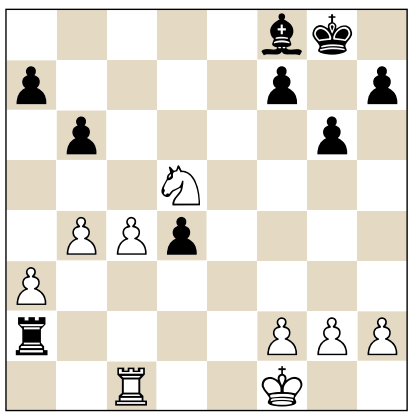
Carlsen-Karjakin
Medias 2011 (10)
position after 20. b4

The position looks equal, but after the next move it becomes clear that Black is actually slightly better.

20...♕d4! 21.♕xd4

21.♘d5 ♕xe4 22.♖xe4 f5 23.♖e2 ♔f7, and Black will double rooks on the c-file.

21...exd4 22.♖xe8 ♖xe8 23.♘d5 ♖e2 24.♔f1 ♖a2

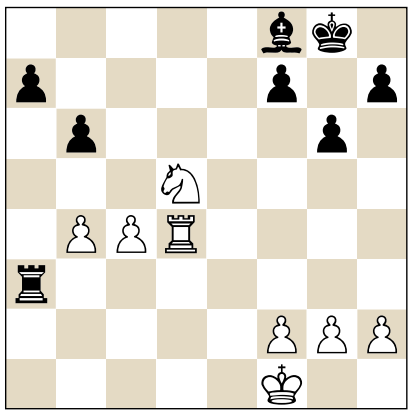


25.♖d1

25.c5 bxc5 26.bxc5 d3 27.c6 (27.♘e3? ♗xc5) 27...♖c2 28.♖d1 ♖xc6 29.♖xd3 ♖c1+ 30.♔e2 ♖c2+, and an

unpleasant task of defending will be awaiting White (line given by GM Dorian Rogozenco).

25...♖xa3 26.♖xd4

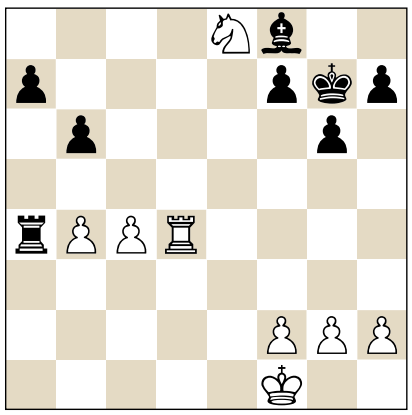


26...♖a4

After the game Karjakin said he 'blundered ♘f6+'.

Black can safely play for a win with 26...♔g7!, e.g. 27.g4 a5 28.bxa5 bxa5 29.g5 a4! 30.♘f6 ♖a1+ 31.♔e2 ♖g1 32.♘e8+ ♔h8, and White is in trouble.

27.♘f6+ ♔g7 28.♘e8+



28...♔g8

Playing for more is risky here: 28...♔h8 29.b5! (not 29.♖d7 ♗xb4, threatening ♖a1-e1+xe8) 29...♗c5 30.♖d7! ♖a1+ 31.♔e2 ♖a2+ 32.♔d3 ♖xf2 33.♖xa7, and according to Rogozenco, White's counterplay should not be underestimated: 33...♔g8 (33...♖xg2 34.♖xf7 ♖xh2 35.♘f6!, with some sort of domination) 34.♖a6 h5 35.♘c7 ♖xg2 36.♘d5 ♖xh2 37.♘xb6 h4 38.♘d7, and it's not clear who is taking more risks here...

29.♘f6+ ♔g7 30.♘e8+ ♔g8

Draw.

■ ■ ■

PETER DOGGERS

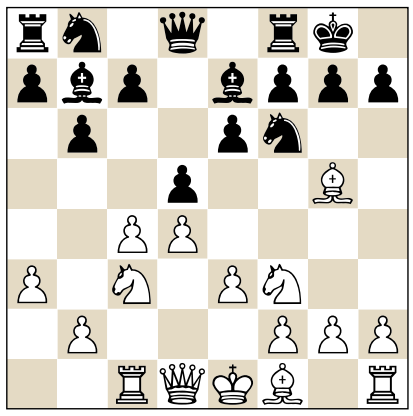
Karjakin(21) and Carlsen (20) won the 2011 Kings' Tournament in Medias. In the middle Romanian grandmaster Dorian Rogozenco.

In 2012 it was Levon Aronian who won the yearly outing in Wijk aan Zee, with Carlsen sharing second place and Karjakin finishing in eight place at 50%. But Karjakin did beat Carlsen with the black pieces.

NOTES BY
Sergey Karjakin

Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
Wijk aan Zee 2012 (9)
Queen's Indian (A15)

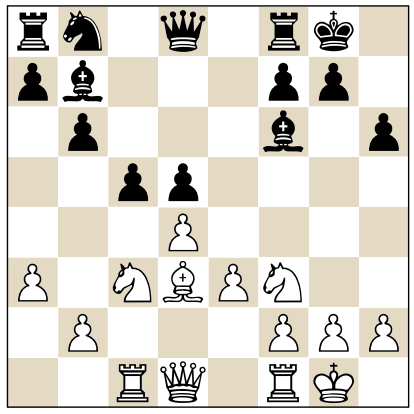
1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 b6 3.♘c3 ♗b7 4.d4 e6 5.a3 d5 6.♗g5 ♗e7 7.e3 0-0 8.♖c1



By choosing a rare branch of the Petrosian Variation, Magnus forced me to stop and think.

8...h6 Not the main move, and one which provoked differing comments.

9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.♗d3 c5 12.0-0



Opinions about this position were divided. Levon Aronian said that this was a well-known variation of the Queen's Gambit with the useful extra tempo a2-a3 for White, but after the game Magnus said that the variation was completely harmless for Black.

12...♘a6

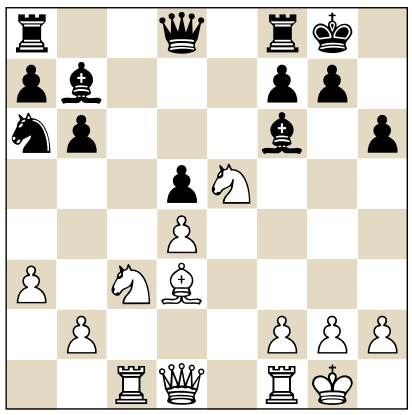
Preparing ...♘c7-e6, but in the end the knight followed a different route...

13.♘e5

An interesting try. White wants to support his knight with f2-f4. I was expecting the knight manoeuvre 13.♘e2 followed by ♘g3 or ♘f4. Another possibility was 13.♗b1, with a complicated game.

Sergey Karjakin took his time to convert a winning advantage. 'From this point Magnus defended desperately, but two extra pawns were sufficient even for me...'

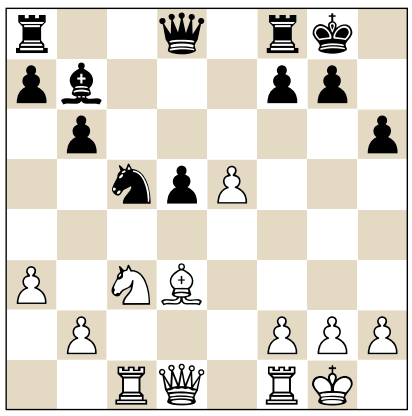
13...cxd4 14.exd4



14...♗xe5

At the board the interesting alternative 14...♘c5 seemed extremely dangerous to me in view of 15.♘xf7 (15.f4 is steadier) 15...♖xf7 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♕h5, and to a human Black's position looks very alarming in view of the weakness of the b1-h7 diagonal.

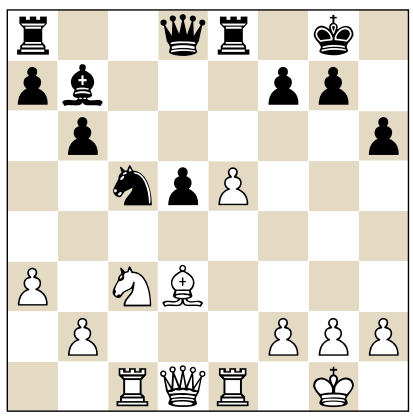
15.dxe5 ♘c5



16.♖e1! The only try for an advantage. 16.♘b5 ♘xd3 17.♕xd3 ♗a6 does not set Black any problems. If 18.f4 ♖c8 19.♖ce1?! (a sharp attempt to play for a win – White should reconcile himself to a draw after 19.♖xc8 ♕xc8 20.♕xd5 ♕c5+ 21.♕xc5 bxc5 22.a4 ♗xb5 23.axb5 ♖b8) 19...♕d7 20.a4 ♖c4! 21.b3 ♗xb5 22.axb5 ♖b4 and Black is better.

16...♖e8

The natural 16...d4 does not work: 17.♘e4 ♗xe4 (bad is 17...♕d5? 18.♗c4! ♕xe5 19.♘xc5 ♕xc5 20.♗xf7+ and White wins) 18.♗xe4 and now after 18...d3? 19.♖xc5 bxc5 20.♗xa8 ♕xa8 21.♕xd3 White wins a pawn.



17.f4?!

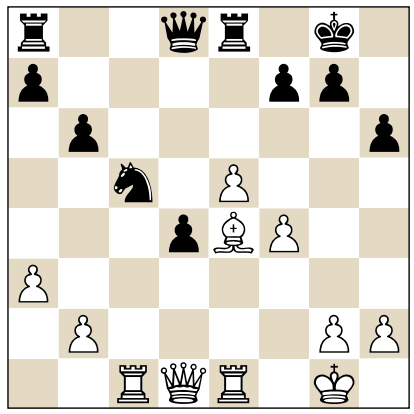
After this move White can no longer fight for an advantage. He should have played 17.♗f1 a6 (the b5-square has to be covered), and here in the computer's opinion the most accurate is 18.♖c2!, retaining a minimal advantage.

17...d4 18.♘e4?

A mistake, which essentially costs White the game. After this he ends up in a very bad position.

He should have played 18.♘b5 ♕d5 19.♖c2 ♘xd3 20.♕xd3 ♗a6 21.a4 ♗xb5 22.axb5 ♖ac8 with a draw.

18...♗xe4 19.♗xe4



19...d3!

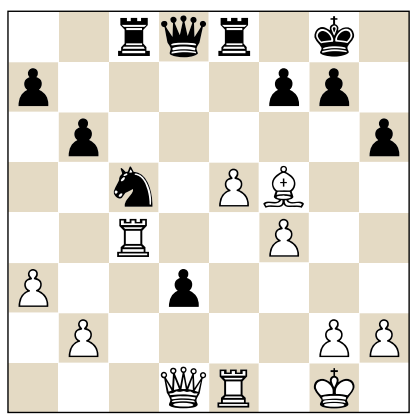
An attractive move, which works thanks to the important inclusion 16...♖e8 17.f4.

20.♖c4

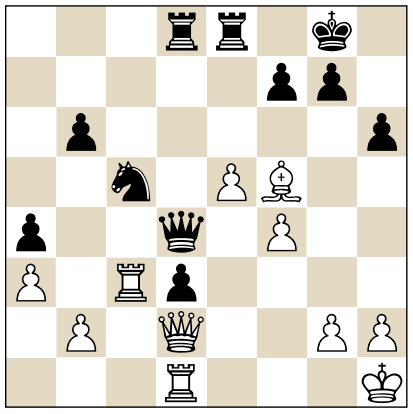
At the board I considered this move to be the strongest, but apparently 20.♖e3 was the lesser evil: 20...♕d4 21.♕f3 ♖ac8 22.♖d1 d2 23.♔f1, and White still somehow holds on.

If 20.♗xa8 d2 21.♗c6 ♕d4+ 22.♔h1 dxe1♕+ 23.♕xe1 ♘d3 24.♕f1 ♖e6 25.♖c2 ♘xf4 with a big advantage for Black, or 20.♖xc5 ♕d4+! – here the importance of including ...♖e8/f4 is seen!

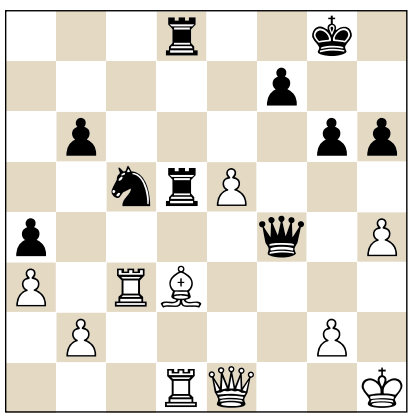
20...♖c8 21.♗f5



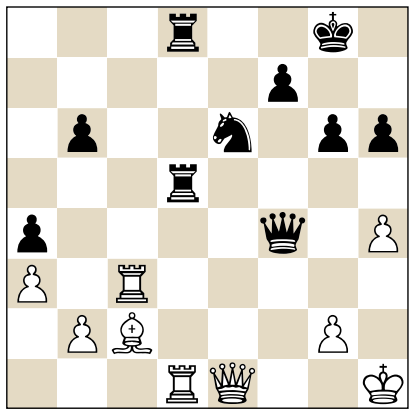
21...♕d5
21...b5 was also strong, but I did not want to deprive the knight at c5 of its support.
22.♖c3 ♖cd8 23.♕d2 ♕d4+ 24.♔h1
24.♔f1 a5 was equally bad for White.
24...a5!
Preventing b2-b4.
25.♖b1
It is hard to suggest anything for White instead.
25...a4 26.♖d1



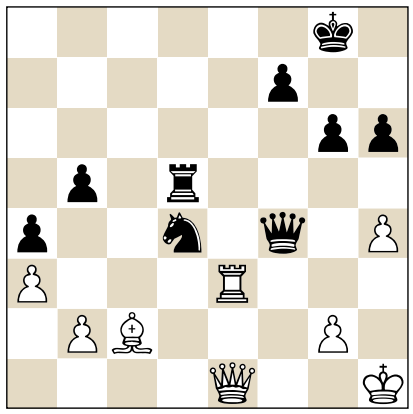
26...♖d5
But this is overdoing it! Of course, Black's position is also good here, but why not calmly win the exchange by 26...g6! 27.♗xd3 ♘e4 28.♗xe4 ♕xd2 29.♖xd2 ♖xd2, with an easy win!
27.h4 g6
27...♖ed8 28.h5 f6 was stronger, when White has no defence.
28.♗xd3 ♖ed8 29.♕e1 ♕xf4



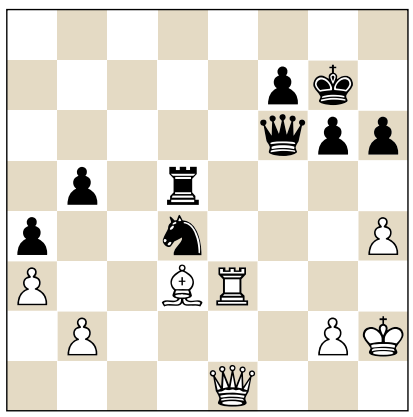
30.e6! ♘xe6 30...♘xd3?! 31.♖dxd3 ♖xd3 32.e7, with drawing chances.
31.♗c2
Over the last few moves White has defended in the most resilient way.



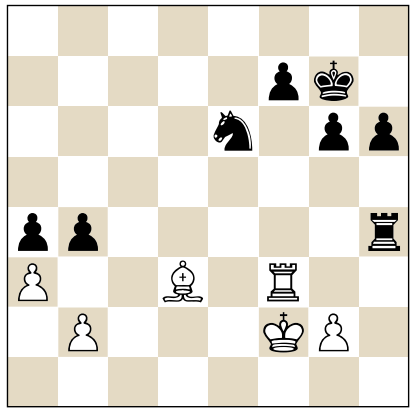
31...b5 The most forceful was 31...♘d4! 32.♗xa4 ♘f5 33.♖xd5 ♖xd5 34.♕e8+ ♔g7 35.♗b3 ♕xh4+ and wins. However, experiencing a shortage of time, I decided to play solidly.
32.♖xd5 ♖xd5 33.♖e3 ♘d4



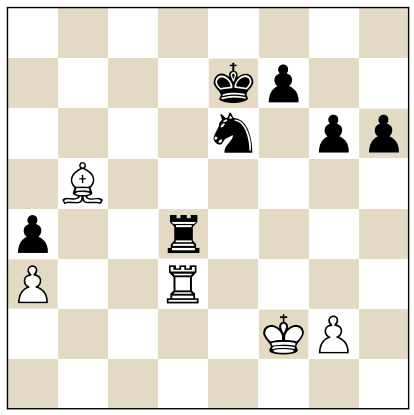
34.♗d3
34.♗xg6 does not work: 34...fxg6 35.♖e8+ ♔g7 36.♖e7+ ♔f6 winning.
34...♔g7 35.♔g1 ♕f6 36.♔h2
More resilient was 36.♕f2 ♘f5 (36...♕d6!?) 37.♗xf5 ♖xf5 38.♖f3 ♖xf3 39.gxf3, when although the position should be won, Black faces a lengthy struggle.



36...♖h5
Played in a time scramble. According to the computer, 36...♖c5! is more forceful, when White loses his b2-pawn. However, without the computer it is hard to realize this even when not in time trouble...
37.♖h3
37.♖e4 was somewhat more resilient.
37...♘e6
Here there were various ways, but up to the time control I tried to choose the most human decisions.
Easier was 37...♕f4+ 38.♕g3 ♘f3+! 39.gxf3 ♕d2+ and wins.
38.♖f3 ♖xh4+ 39.♔g1 ♕d4+ 40.♕f2 ♕xf2+ 41.♔xf2 b4

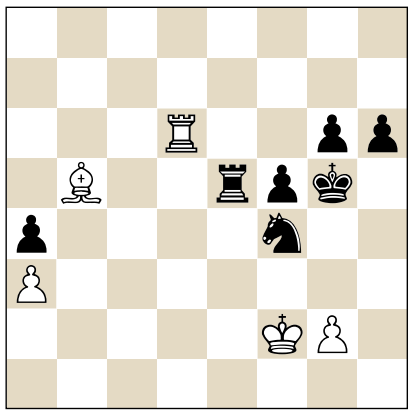


From this point Magnus defended desperately, but two extra pawns were sufficient even for me...
42.♖e3 ♖d4 43.♗b5 ♔f6 44.♖f3+
Or 44.♗xa4 bxa3 45.♖xa3 ♖d2+ and wins.
44...♔e7 45.♖d3 bxa3 46.bxa3

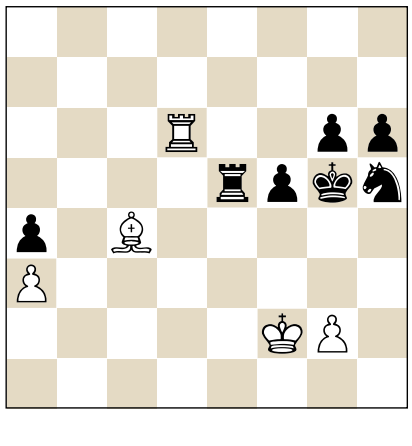


46...♖f4+
46...♖xd3 47.♗xd3 ♘c5 48.♗b5 f5 49.♔e3 g5 50.♔d4 ♔d6 was most probably also winning, but I decided to keep the rooks on.
47.♔e3 f5 48.♖d7+ ♔f6 49.♖d6 ♖e4+ 50.♔f2 ♔g5 51.♗e8

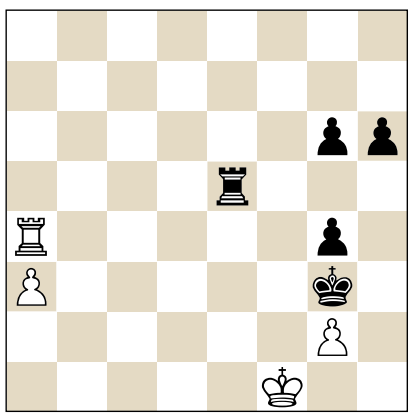
On 51.♗c6 Black wins with 51...♘c5!.
51...♘f4 52.♗b5 ♖e5



53.♗c4 53.♗xa4 loses to 53...♖e2+.
53...♘h5



The decisive knight manoeuvre! Black gives up the a4-pawn, but in return he weaves a mating net around the white king.
54.♖a6 ♘f6 55.♖xa4 ♘g4+ 56.♔f1 ♔h4! 57.♗e2 ♔g3 58.♗xg4 fxg4



In view of the fact that the black king infiltrates to h2, the endgame is completely hopeless for White.
59.♖b4 h5 60.a4 ♔h2
White resigned.

■ ■ ■

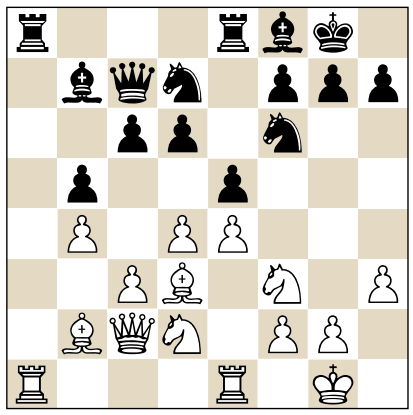
‘After winning four games in a row Karjakin must have been full of confidence and perhaps he got a bit carried away.’

Both **in 2013** and **2014** Sergey Karjakin won Norway Chess, the super-tournament in Stavanger. But Carlsen managed to beat him in their game in 2013.

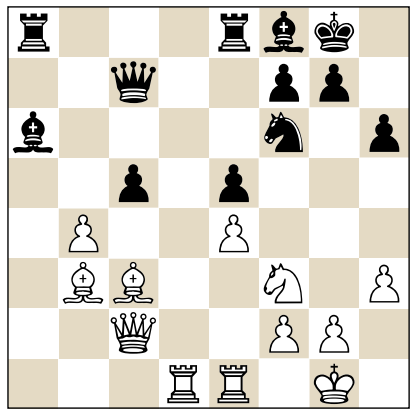
NOTES BY
Simen Agdestein

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Stavanger 2013 (5)
Ruy Lopez, Breyer (C41)

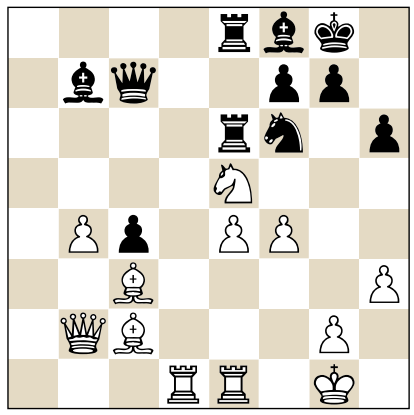
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♘b8 10.d4 ♘bd7 11.♘bd2 ♗b7 12.♗c2 ♖e8 13.a4 ♗f8 14.♗d3 c6 15.♕c2 ♖c8 16.axb5 axb5 17.b4 ♕c7 18.♗b2 ♖a8 We were a bit surprised by Carlsen’s opening choice. It seemed to be a ‘must win-situation’ for Carlsen if he wanted to come within striking distance of Karjakin, who at this point was two full points ahead of him. But there is not so much to play for in this line. With all the tension in the centre still there, the game can take different paths, but the common feature is that these positions are easy to play for White and Karjakin of course knows what he’s doing.



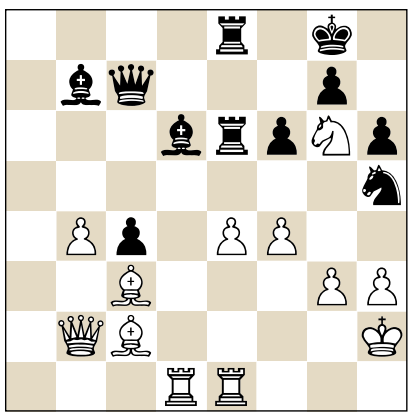
19.♖ad1! The main focus here is the centre. **19...♘b6 20.c4 bxc4 21.♘xc4 ♘xc4 22.♗xc4 h6** With the queen unprotected on c7 there are no tricks with ...d6-d5. **23.dxe5!** Simple and good. **23...dxe5 24.♗c3 ♗a6 25.♗b3 c5**



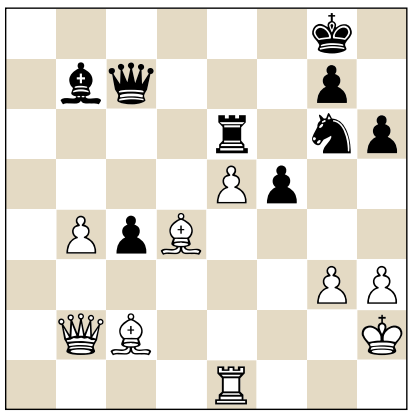
26.♕b2
After winning four games in a row Karjakin must have been full of confidence and perhaps he got a bit carried away. Carlsen pointed out 26.bxc5 ♕xc5 27.♕b2, and he thought he might have had to struggle for a draw after 27...♗c4 28.♗xc4 ♕xc4 29.♘xe5 ♕a2.
26...c4 27.♗a4 ♖e6 28.♘xe5 This, of course, also seemed very strong for White.
28...♗b7 29.♗c2 As both Carlsen and the computers point out, 29.♗b5 looks like a huge white advantage.
29...♖ae8 30.f4



30...♗d6! Now it's not so clear. **31.♔h2** Putting the king on this diagonal is not the most obvious decision. Actually, White has to be very precise already to maintain the balance. **31...♘h5 32.g3 f6 33.♘g6** 33.♖xd6 ♖xd6 34.♘xc4 was pointed out by some of the other players, but White is still in trouble after 34...♖c6 35.♗b3 ♔h8, since 36.♕e2 can be met strongly by 36...♘xf4!.



33...♘xf4! Perhaps Karjakin had overlooked this a few moves ago. **34.♖xd6** 34.gxf4 ♗xf4+ is just a decisive mating attack. **34...♘xg6 35.♖xe6 ♖xe6** Magnus has regained the pawn and is clearly better. **36.♗d4 f5 37.e5**



37...♘xe5! A little trick. **38.♗xe5** 38.♖xe5 ♖xe5 39.♗xe5 ♕c6 is mate. **38...♕c6 39.♖g1** The last chance was 39.♗e4 fxe4 40.♖e3. **39...♕d5 40.♗xf5 ♖xe5 41.♗g4 h5** White is helpless here with his exposed king. **42.♗d1 c3 43.♕f2 ♖f5 44.♕e3 ♕f7 45.g4 ♖e5 46.♕d4 ♕c7** White resigned. After 47.♕f4 ♖e2+ 48.♔g3 h4+ wins the queen.

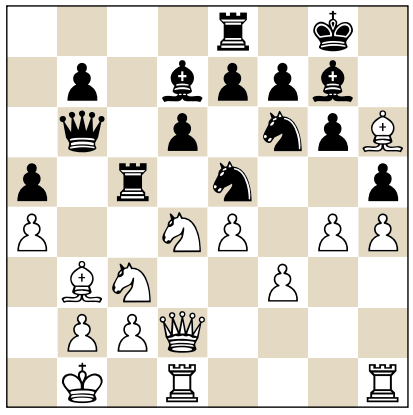
■ ■ ■

In 2014 Magnus Carlsen claimed his second and third world title, in rapid and blitz in Dubai. In the rapid game Carlsen was pressing with Black.

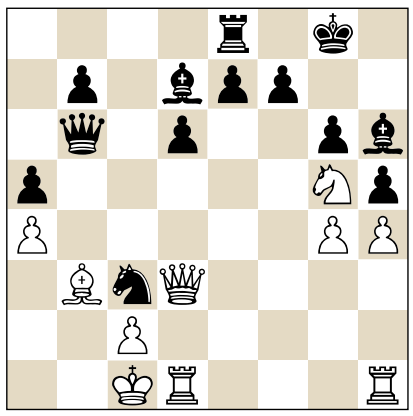
NOTES BY
Loek van Wely

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Dubai rapid 2014 (6)
Sicilian Dragon
Yugoslav Attack B78

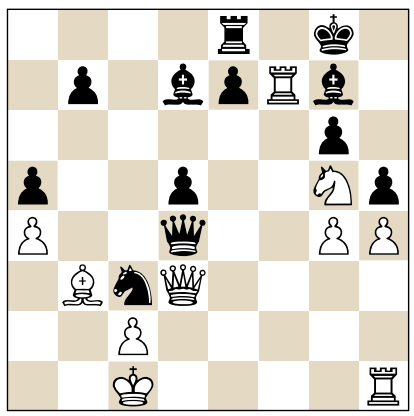
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 g6 6.♗e3 ♗g7 7.f3 ♘c6 8.♕d2 0-0 9.♗c4 ♗d7 10.h4 h5 11.0-0-0 ♘e5 12.♗b3 ♖c8 13.♗g5 ♖c5 14.♔b1 ♖e8 15.♗h6 a5 16.a4 ♕b6 17.g4
Now the party is starting!



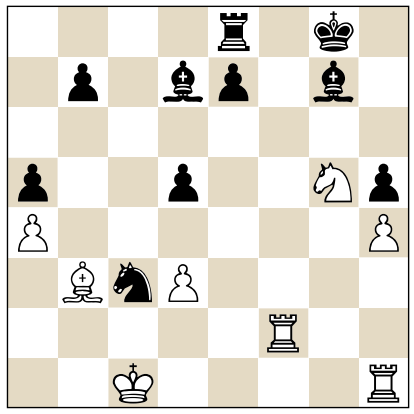
17...♖xc3 Standard. **18.bxc3 ♘xf3** And a good follow-up. **19.♘xf3 ♘xe4 20.♕d3 ♘xc3+ 21.♔c1 ♗xh6+ 22.♘g5**
Let's take stock for a moment: Black has gotten his invested material back, and even more than that, but now he has some issues on f7 and g6.



22...♗g7 23.♖df1?!
After 23.♗xf7+ ♔h8 24.♕xg6 Black is forced to give perpetual check: 24...♕e3+ 25.♖d2 ♘e2+ 26.♔b1 ♘c3+ 27.♔c1.
23...d5 Not the best.
After 23...♗xg4! 24.♖xf7 ♘e2+ 25.♔b1 (on 25.♕xe2 Black should go 25...♕xb3! – and not 25...♗xe2?? 26.♖f8+ ♔xf8 27.♘h7 mate) 25...d5 26.♖e1 ♘d4 Black has the initiative.
24.♖xf7 ♕d4



25.gxh5 The resulting endgame is not so simple, which is why I prefer 25.♖xg7+ ♕xg7 26.♖f1 ♖f8 27.♗xd5+ ♘xd5 28.♕xd5+ e6 29.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 30.♕d6+ ♕e7 31.♕e5, and the game should end in a draw.
25...♕xd3 26.cxd3 gxh5 27.♖f2



27...♗d4
27...b5! was Magnus's last big chance. He probably preferred winning the pawn on a4 to exchanging it. Suddenly he became too greedy in the Dragon!
28.♖c2
It's still a bit better for Magnus, but Sergey is a tough defender and after 58 moves it was a draw.

A good part of Magnus Carlsen's success can be attributed to his physical fitness. On the free days in Wijk aan Zee 2013 he made sure he didn't miss the football games to let off steam. As Carlsen breaks away, another fanatic, Loek van Wely, looks determined to stop the Norwegian.

FINAL REHEARSAL

In 2016 Carlsen and Karjakin played two games in the Bilbao Masters, a six-player round-robin. Magnus's former coach Simen Agdestein took a closer look at this dress rehearsal and draws some conclusions for the match in New York.

NOTES BY
Simen Agdestein

Magnus Carlsen
Sergey Karjakin
Bilbao 2016 (3)
Sicilian (B50)

'Has it been a mystery to me that Magnus has become so good? All the time I have to pinch my arm!' Magnus's father says in the trailer for the film about Magnus that will appear in cinemas all over the world shortly. I have never really been that surprised, since my focus in the case of Magnus has always been on him becoming even more than World Champion. Still, I thought many times that it was all over, that the balloon had burst, that it couldn't go on like this forever.

One such moment was after Magnus lost in the first round of the Bilbao Masters against Hikaru Nakamura. However, three days and three wins later, Magnus was in the clear lead and won the tournament convincingly. And not only that, he crushed the next World Championship contender in great style. Although both players say that it was just another game, Magnus winning this game must have been like scoring 1-0.

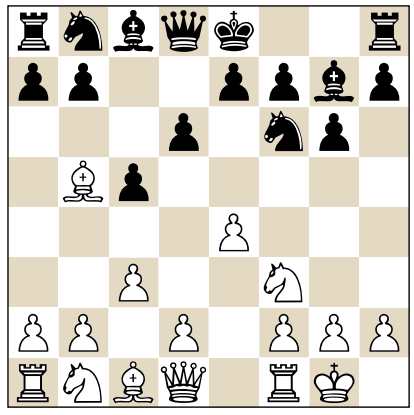
1.e4 There was some talk about the players hiding their opening preparation before the match, but I believe Magnus's approach is much more pragmatic. I guess he just felt like playing the king pawn this day.

1...c5

Karjakin is a bit easier to predict.

2.♘f3 d6 3.c3!? Magnus won't walk the well-trodden paths for too long. **3...♘f6 4.♗e2 g6 5.0-0 ♗g7 6.♗b5+**

I thought I'd never seen the position before, but when I looked it up, I saw that Magnus had played the same against Wang Hao in Norway Chess in 2013, when I was actually commentating for the organizers' website. Magnus's memory is brilliant, but mine is less so, I'm afraid. When I look more closely, however, I see that it was in the preliminary blitz that they played the game, which I guess should excuse me for not remembering.

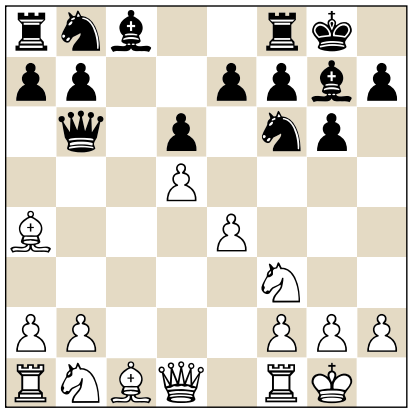


6...♘c6 Wang Hao played 6...♗d7, and after 7.♗xd7+ ♘fxd7 8.d4 it was 'just a game', but Magnus had his beloved pawn centre. He likes harmony, and two pawns in the middle certainly are harmonious.

7.d4 ♕b6

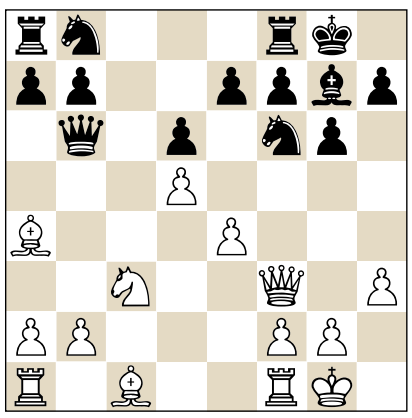
I can't recall at which speed the players made their moves, but to me it seems as if Magnus has achieved his goal of taking his opponent by surprise. The position is not completely new, but the strong guys haven't really agreed on how to treat the black side of this. There are many alternative plans.

8.♗a4 cxd4 9.cxd4 0-0 10.d5 ♘b8



I struggle with the expression 'A knight on the rim is dim' or something. In all languages, actually. 'Ein Springer am Rande ist ein Springer am Strande?' Or how was it again that Siegbert Tarrasch explained that a knight on the edge of the board is not very good? Anyway, 10...♘a5, with the single-minded idea of jumping to c4, was a decent alternative. 10...♘e5 is perhaps a weaker player's first choice, as going to the middle makes sense, but closing the long diagonal is nothing for players at this level, I guess.

11.♘c3 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3



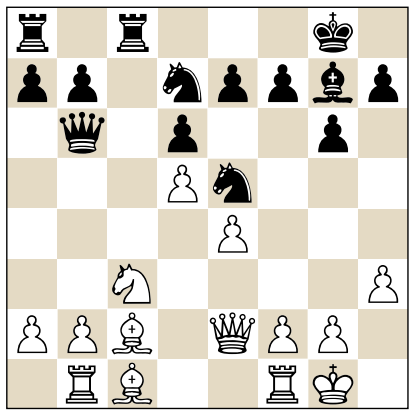
Magnus has the bishop pair and a space advantage, assets I'm also fond of, but Michael Adams thought me a lesson once that with a pawn structure like this Black can coordinate his pieces very well.

13...♘bd7 14.♖b1 ♖fc8 15.♗c2

It seemed as if White started off with a lead in development, but now Magnus has to struggle to find prosperous places for his pieces.

15...♘e5! The knight is back in the middle! If c4 was the goal, however, the route via b8 wasn't the fastest one.

16.♕e2 ♘fd7

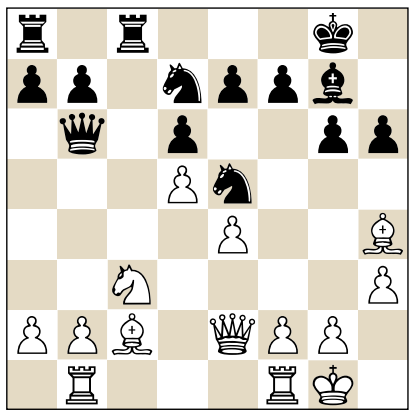


Objectively speaking, Black has won the opening battle, but as always with Magnus, that's not the point. Karjakin has been given challenges he had to solve over the board, and surprisingly soon he steps in the wrong direction.

17.♗g5 h6

Calculating is no problem for Karjakin, is my impression. It's not totally clear what happens after 18.♗xe7, as White can mess up things a lot after 18...f6, but 18...g5! 19.♘b5 ♘g6 20.♘xd6 (20.♗xd6 a6) 20...♘xe7 21.♘xc8 ♘xc8 certainly isn't to Magnus's liking.

18.♗h4

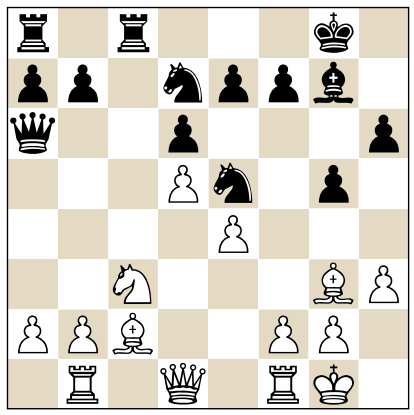


18...g5!?

I feel we're about to enter a stage of the game in which I should be careful with my positional judgements. This is a bit too Benoni-like for my taste, but I guess a player like Nakamura would be delighted with such dark-square dominance in the centre. I am not sure how confident Karjakin is here. Second World Champion Emanuel Lasker's trademark was to get his opponents out of their usual pattern, and I have often thought that Magnus is a bit like that. Kasparov had his dear Alekhine, and Karpov was like Capablanca, but I think that Magnus has taken the best from all of them, including Lasker.

19.♗g3 ♕a6 20.♕d1

A queen trade is out of the question. Doubled black pawns on the a-file are of no relevance here. It's all about whether Black's control of the dark squares has cost too much or not.



20...♖c4?

Sometimes I get impressed by judgements about players' strengths and weaknesses. Is that a tradition from the old Soviet school? You analyse your games, generalize and try to get rid of your weaknesses? Or even better, you analyse your opponent's games, make a 'profile' and try to take advantage of his weaknesses?

My approach has rather been that you should linger on your wins as long and as much as possible. Get used to seeing yourself as a winner and use your wins to bolster your confidence, since that is more important than anything else.

Endlessly analysing your losses hasn't the same building effect, at least not for me, and I believe not for Magnus either. You made a mistake in that particular position, but never mind, you will never get that position again anyway, so don't let it affect your mood and certainly not your confidence too much.

What can be said about Karjakin after this game and perhaps this

move in particular, I'm not sure. Is it something about his sense of danger, or his positional understanding? I don't know, but what is certain is that Magnus now gets a free hand to launch a great initiative on the kingside without Black creating anything but displaced pieces on the other side.

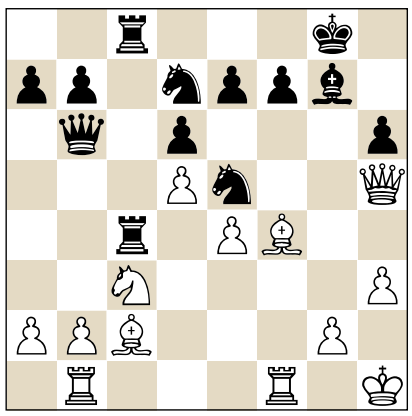
If you're the calculating type, there's a lot of work after 20...♘c4 21.♗d3 ♘c5 22.♗e2 ♗xc3 23.bxc3 ♘xe4, or even 23...♕xa2, since 24.♖a1 ♕b3 25.♕d4 ♘a4 seems to hold, but the positional approach is just 20...♘g6, and any counterplay for White seems a long way off.

21.♔h1 ♖ac8

Now it's too late for 21...♘g6, since Black's previous move allows 22.♗d3.

22.f4! gxf4 23.♗xf4 ♕b6 24.♕h5!

While Black is just fumbling around on the queenside, White has already created very concrete threats on the other side.



24...♘f6

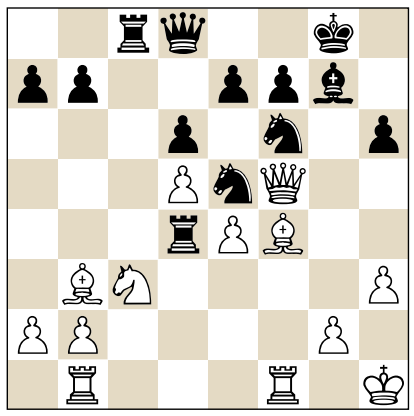
24...♔h7 certainly isn't a safe haven for Black's king. There's no structure to hide behind. The only chance is to fight the forces with pieces.

25.♕f5 ♕d8 26.♗b3

Winning a pawn on e5 is too little in principle, since Black would regain his dark-square control, but here taking twice on e5 will eventually run into ...♘xe4.

26...♖d4

This rook has not been very successful, but I'm surprised by how Magnus exploits its shortcomings.



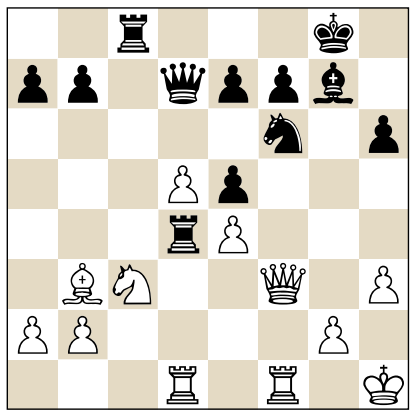
27.♗xe5

I guess I would have spent all my energy on 27.♗e3, and perhaps Karjakin did too, but Magnus makes it look very simple.

27...dxe5 28.♖bd1

I would never have managed to come up with this plan! I guess Magnus's reasoning is simply to take away the most active black pieces to eliminate all counterplay.

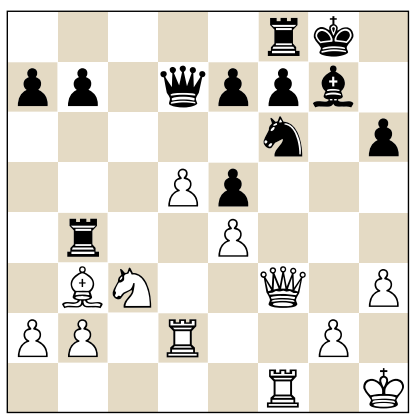
28...♕d7 29.♕f3



29...♖b4 Another critical decision with the rook.

It's easy to suggest 29...♖xd1 to cut some claws, but White can take with either the bishop or the knight, and suddenly it's all about the light squares, where White is in command.

30.♖d2 ♖f8

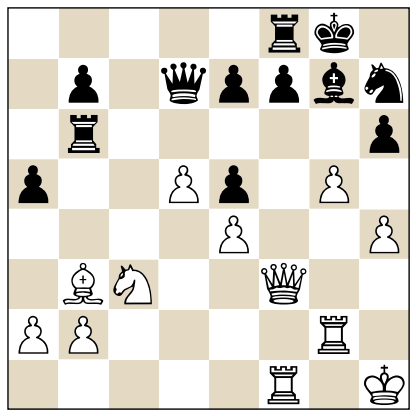


The f7-square had to be covered, but after Magnus's next move it becomes clear that even worse demons will appear on the g-file.

31.g4! a5

This is tantamount to resigning. Black's initiative on the queenside is obviously too slow, and it doesn't lead to much anyway. I don't know if there's a moral in this somewhere, but Karjakin could have at least tried to stop White's obvious onslaught.

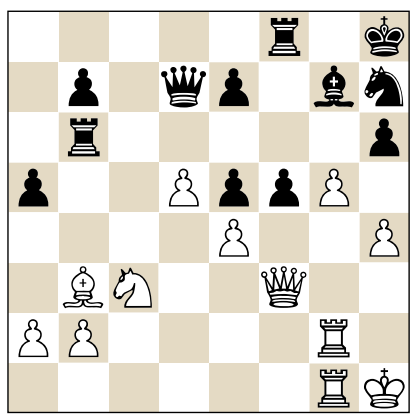
32.♖g2 ♘h7 33.h4 ♖b6 34.g5



34...♔h8

First the f-file was weak. Now Karjakin tries to run away from the g-file, but with the king in the corner, taking on g5 disappears as an option. But perhaps it was too late anyway. After 34...hxg5 35.hxg5 ♖g6 36.♕h5 White can follow up with ♖f5 and doubling on the h-file. Black can perhaps avoid mate by escaping with the knight to f8, but then White can simply drop back to the f-file and attack f7. Black's only hope, perhaps, was 34...♖g6 35.♕h5? ♕h3+ 36.♔g1 ♖xg5, but Magnus can instead play 35.♖fg1 or 35.♕f5.

35.♖fg1 f5



MARIA EMELIANOVA

At the end of the Bilbao Masters a satisfied Magnus Carlsen (with his third txapela) poses for his family while his sister Ingrid takes a selfie (just kidding).

If I remember correctly, Karjakin even was in time-trouble here, but it doesn't really matter. Black's pieces lack all coordination, whereas Magnus's pieces work beautifully together.

36.♕h3 There are different ways to do it now. **36...♖b4** This rook again! With 36...♖g6 it would at least have entered the battle, but after 37.gxh6 ♖xg2 38.♕xg2 ♗xh6 39.d6 e6 40.♕g6 it's all over anyway.

37.gxh6 ♗xh6 38.♕g3

Mate is threatened on g8.

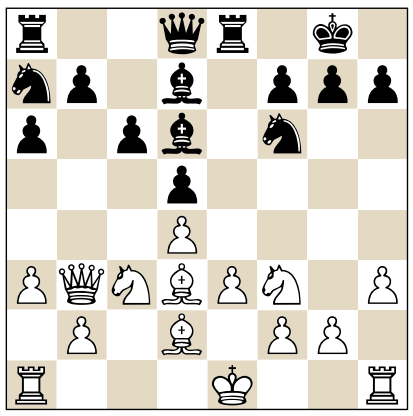
38...♘f6 39.♕g6 ♘g4 40.♖xg4

Black resigned.

Magnus won this game with great ease and in the second encounter with reversed colours Karjakin showed an even bleaker face with the white pieces by going for something he thought was a draw.

Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Bilbao 2016 (8)
Queen's Gambit Declined (D38)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 ♗b4 5.♕a4+ ♘c6 6.e3 0-0 7.♕c2 ♖e8 8.♗d2 a6 9.a3 ♗d6 10.h3 ♗d7 11.cxd5 exd5 12.♗d3 ♘a7 13.♕b3 c6



14.♕xb7?!

With this move Karjakin admits that a draw was his ambition, but he was actually lucky to get it.

14...♘b5 15.♘xb5 axb5

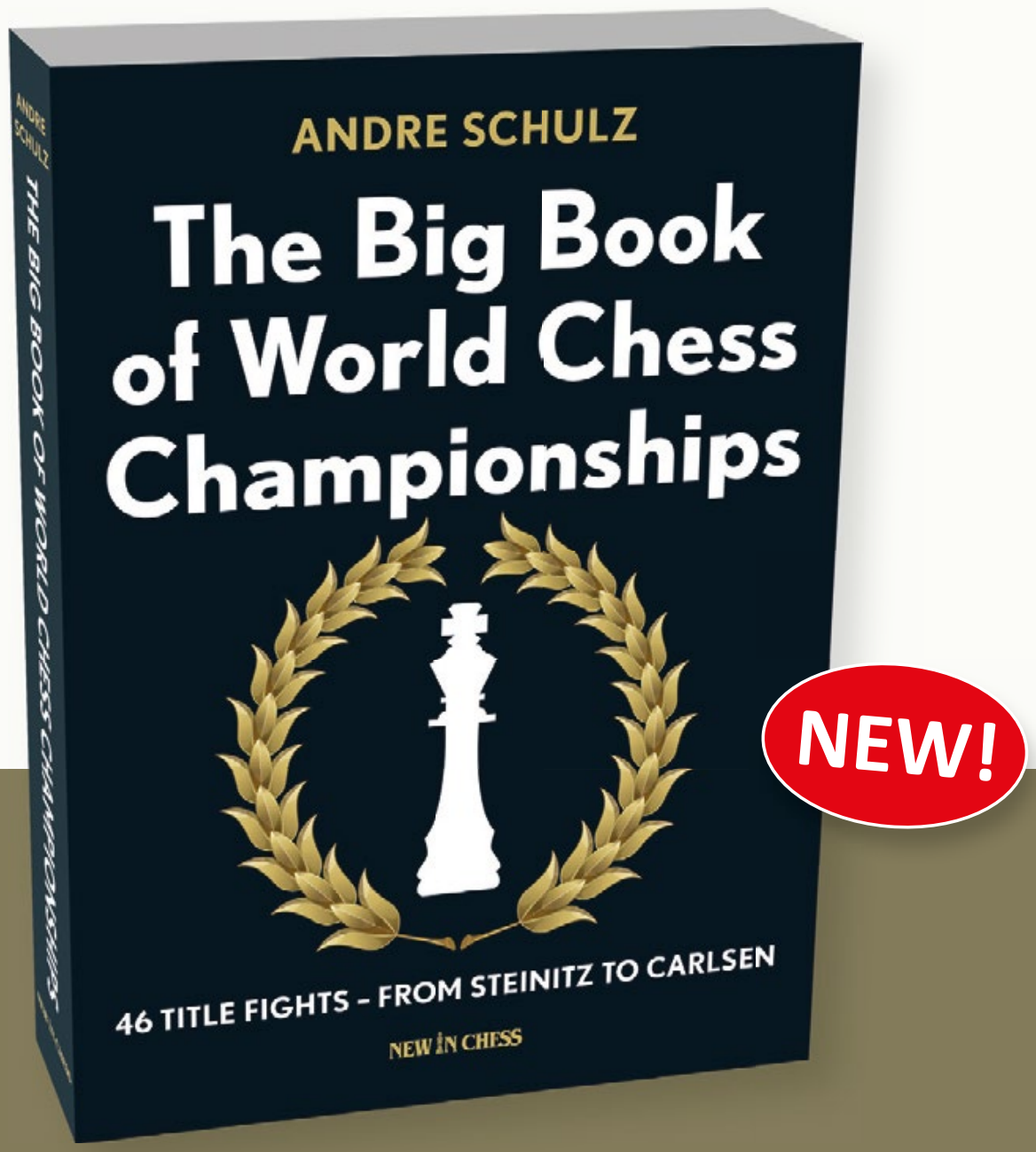
Magnus accepts the invitation to a short work day, but the computer gives Black an advantage after 15...cxb5. It's not totally clear, but Karjakin would certainly have had to struggle hard to avoid an even worse prelude for the match.

16.♘e5 ♖b8 17.♕a6 ♖a8 18.♕b7 ♖b8 19.♕a6 ♖a8 ½-½

Of course, I am highly biased, but I think Magnus Carlsen will also win his third World Championship match. The results speak for themselves. He has proven himself a worthy champion in many ways. But you never know, especially with matches. Still, I believe that having been through it all before should count for something. Now Magnus is the experienced one. How Karjakin will handle the pressure is hard to predict. From what I have heard, Karjakin gets all the assistance he can think of from the Russian authorities, but in the end you have to do the fighting alone. As Anand surely must have felt with the hordes of Indians rooting for him, it's not easy to have too much support either.

Just handling New York will perhaps also be an issue, and the enormous interest the match will generate certainly will be. In Norway we're preparing for another giant chess show in the media. During the previous matches banks had to close their Internet connection to make sure their employees worked instead of following Magnus's games. This is about much more than playing chess, and I'm curious to see how Karjakin will react to all the questions from our media. Actually, Karjakin is quite popular in Norway, as he has won the first two Norway Chess tournaments. In fact, both Carlsen and Karjakin have already been invited for the 2017 edition. So the World Champion will take part regardless. It only remains to be seen who that will be. ■

Relive the magic of Capablanca, Alekhine, Botvinnik, Tal, Karpov, Kasparov, Bobby Fischer and the others...



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When two prodigies clash

The match in New York is the first fight for the supreme title that brings together two players under 30 years of age. What's more, both Carlsen and Karjakin are former prodigies. **VITALY GNIRENKO** looks at the role that prodigies have played in the history of the Chess World Championship.

Since the time of the first official match for the World Championship between Wilhelm Steinitz and Johannes Zukertort in 1886, 130 years have passed. During this time there have been 44 official classical matches (not counting the FIDE matches between 1993-2004), in which 30 players have participated. These include seven who can reasonably be considered prodigies: José Raúl Capablanca, Boris Spassky, Robert Fischer, Garry Kasparov, Nigel Short, Peter Leko and Magnus Carlsen. In the near future this list will be joined by Sergey Karjakin. But only twice have two prodigies from the given list met each other in matches for the title.

In 1972 these were Spassky and Fischer, and in 1993 Kasparov and Short. The first of these two matches had a clear political slant as a contest between socialism and capitalism. The names of the players and the atmosphere of this match raised chess to an unprecedented peak of world popularity. The second is remembered for the fact that it closed the history of the many years of the Karpov-Kasparov confrontation and caused a split in the chess world, because of the participants' refusal to play under the aegis of FIDE.

But many talented young players, including former prodigies, for various reasons have not succeeded in breaking through to a main match. Here are several typical examples.

Reshevsky

The American grandmaster Samuel Reshevsky (1911-1992) was undoubtedly a prodigy, who began making a living from chess from the age of 8, touring Europe and the USA giving simultaneous displays and exhibition games. But when he was 13 he stopped playing chess, in order to obtain middle and then higher education. Chess did not provide stable

Sergey Karjakin at the age of 13, when he was already a grandmaster.

13-Year-old Magnus Carlsen in Wijk aan Zee 2004, three months before he became a grandmaster.

earnings, and he had to become an accountant. This was a first break in play, undesirable for one seeking the highest achievements. Reshevsky returned to active appearances 11 years later. He again immediately drew the attention of the chess world, by defeating another former prodigy, Capablanca, at the international tournament in Margate in 1935.

In view of the fact that in those years the World Champion Alexander Alekhine was no longer achieving consistent results, the chances of a victory against him in a match by any of the outstanding young grandmasters of that time, Reshevsky, Keres, Botvinnik and Fine, were very great. But the Second World War and Alekhine's death in 1946 prevented the traditional process of replacing the World Champion. A second pause in Reshevsky's chess career ensued.

In the post-war years, although he was not a professional player, for a long time Reshevsky maintained a consistently high level of play, but he was unable to become World Champion in the 1948 match-tournament in The Hague and Moscow or to gain the right to an official match with the World Champion in the 1953 Candidates' Tournament in Zurich. One of the important reasons for this failure was undoubtedly the strategy of team play employed in these events by the Soviet grandmasters. At the demand of the Soviet sports party officials, they fought desperately against the American in every game, whereas between themselves, making pre-arranged draws, they could rest. When the Candidates' Tournaments were replaced by matches, because of his age Reshevsky could no longer successfully compete.

On one occasion he was nevertheless able to meet and defeat the World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik (+1, –0, =3) in a mini-match on Board 1 in the USSR-USA team match in Moscow in 1955.

Stolberg and Junge

The Second World War prevented a meeting, and possibly a match for the World Championship, between two other chess talents, Mark Stolberg and Klaus Junge, who were practically of the same age and shared an identical tragic fate. In 1939 Mark Stolberg (1922-1942) was the youngest master in the Soviet Union. Already in 1940 he played in the final of the USSR Championship. To achieve the right at such an age to participate in an event of such a level was something achieved only by Botvinnik, and later by Spassky and Kasparov. That is, only three players who at various times were World Champions. In 1940, despite the fact that he had poor eyesight, Mark was called up into the army. He died near Kerch in the Crimea.

Klaus Junge (1924-1945) was the most talented player in Germany after Emanuel Lasker. In the period 1941-42 he successfully competed

with Alekhine and Keres in international tournaments. At the tournament in Salzburg in 1942 he defeated the World Champion Alekhine in their individual meeting at the age of 18. For about 50 years his win over a World Champion was a record achievement for a player of his age. In 1943 Junge was called up into the army and he died not far from Hamburg.

Kamsky

Of the prodigies of the generation currently playing, mention should be made of Gata Kamsky (born 1974), who in his youth achieved outstanding successes. When he was 12 he became USSR Junior Champion, something which no one had previously achieved at such an early age.

In 1989 the Kamsky family decided to move to the USA. Gata soon won the championship of that country and became a grandmaster. He was selected for the Interzonal tournament. After winning the super-tournament in Tilburg in 1990 he became one of the world chess elite.

In 1992 at the tournament in Dortmund, Kamsky became the author of a hitherto unsurpassed achievement – not yet 18, in an individual game he defeated the World Champion Kasparov. This was an improvement on Junge's splendid result in 1942.

In 1993 Gata Kamsky took part in the Candidates' matches, that is in both the cycle of the PCA (Professional Chess Association), created after the breakaway of Kasparov and Short, and the FIDE cycle. In the PCA matches he crushed the future World Champion Vladimir Kramnik and the recent Challenger Nigel Short, but for the right to a match with Kasparov he lost out to Anand. In the FIDE cycle Gata defeated Van der Sterren, Salov and snatched victory in the tie-break against Anand.

His match for the FIDE version of the title took place in 1996 in Elista and ended in victory for Anatoly Karpov. Despite this failure, it was clear that Kamsky was one of the leading players who in the near future could earn the right to a match with Garry Kasparov. But at that moment, at the height of his achievements, he gave up regular chess playing and concentrated on obtaining higher education.

Table 1

	Magnus Carlsen						Sergey Karakin			
	+	–	=	place	direct encounter		+	–	=	place
2005 Wijk aan Zee (B)	3	2	8	7	½	½	7	1	5	1
2007 Wijk aan Zee	0	4	9	13-14	½	½	3	3	7	7-8
2008 Baku FIDE GP	4	1	8	1-3	½	½	2	3	8	8-10
2008 Foros	5	0	6	1	½	½	2	1	8	3
2009 Wijk aan Zee	2	1	10	5-6	½	½	5	2	6	1
2010 Wijk aan Zee	5	1	7	1	1	0	2	1	10	6-7
2011 Medias, Kings Tournament	3	0	7	1-2	½	½	3	0	7	1-2
2011 Medias, Kings Tournament					½	½				
2011 Moscow, Tal Memorial	2	0	7	1-2	½	½	1	0	8	3-5
2012 Wijk aan Zee	4	1	8	2-4	0	1	5	5	3	8
2012 Bilbao / Sao Paulo	4	1	5	1	½	½	1	2	7	4
2012 Bilbao / Sao Paulo					½	½				
2013 Wijk aan Zee	7	0	6	1	1	0	4	1	8	3-4
2013 Stavanger, Norway Chess	3	1	5	2-3	1	0	5	2	2	1
2013 Moscow, Tal Memorial	3	1	5	2	½	½	0	1	8	7
2014 Shamkir	5	2	3	1	½	½	0	0	10	3-5
2014 Shamkir					½	½				
2014 Stavanger, Norway Chess	2	0	7	2	½	½	4	1	4	1
2016 Wijk aan Zee	5	0	8	1	½	½	1	2	10	9
2016 Bilbao	4	1	5	1	1	0	0	1	9	5
2016 Bilbao					½	½				
	61	**16**	**114**		**12**	**9**	**45**	**26**	**120**	

ROSA DE LAS NIEVES

In 1993 and 1994 Gata Kamsky was incredibly successful both in the PCA and the FIDE World Championship cycles.

Table2

		results before match	result in the match
1927	**Capablanca-Alekhine**	+5, –0, =7	+3, –6, =25
1935	**Alekhine-Euwe**	+2, –1, =4	+8, –9, =13
1992	**Spassky-Fischer**	+3, –0, =2	+2, –7, =11
2016	**Carlsen-Karjakin**	+4, –1, =16	?

The main role in the taking of this difficult decision was supposedly played by Gata's father Rustam, who brought him up alone and, being a maximalist, expected of him only his earlier high achievements. For high chess achievements, betrayals to the game for a lengthy period are evidently not forgiven. Kamsky's return to top-class play took place in 2004. The qualified lawyer from Arizona University, despite isolated significant successes, could no longer break through into the Candidates' for a match with the World Champions – Kramnik, Anand and Carlsen, the latter being 16 years younger than him.

The biographies examined indicate that fate has not granted all young chess talents a peaceful existence. Not all of them have managed to advance continuously towards their set high goal, and to have the constant support of wise parents, and experienced trainers and mentors.

But none of this applies to the opponents in the forthcoming New York match, whose lives have turned out very successfully and who, despite their youth, have achieved much.

Since 2005 they have played 21 classical games against each other and many rapid and blitz games. (See Table 1.)

The classical World Champions

1	**1886-1894**	**Wilhelm Steinitz**
2	**1894-1921**	**Emanuel Lasker**
3	**1921-1927**	**José Raul Capablanca**
4	**1927-1935 1937-1946**	**Alexander Alekhine**
5	**1935-1937**	**Max Euwe**
6	**1948-1957 1958-1960 1961-1963**	**Mikhail Botvinnik**
7	**1957-1958**	**Vassily Smyslov**
8	**1960-1961**	**Mikhail Tal**
9	**1963-1969**	**Tigran Petrosian**
10	**1969-1972**	**Boris Spassky**
11	**1972-1975**	**Robert Fischer**
12	**1975-1985**	**Anatoly Karpov**
13	**1985-2000**	**Garry Kasparov**
14	**2000-2007**	**Vladimir Kramnik**
15	**2007-2013**	**Viswanathan Anand**
16	**2013-?**	**Magnus Carlsen**

The superiority of the World Champion in classical play is evident. But the results of certain famous matches from the past (see Table 2) indicate that successes in individual meetings before a match have not always been confirmed in a match for the World Championship. (See Table 2.)

It should be mentioned that Carlsen's first win in classical play against the World Champion Anand was gained at the age of 18, at the tournament in Linares in 2009, long before their match for the title in 2013. Karjakin, who has met three World Champions (Kramnik, Anand and Carlsen) has not beaten any of them in classical play while they were the reigning champion.

But even this fact may not give any particular advantages to the World Champion on the eve of the forthcoming match. The lack of wins over World Champions before the match for the title did not prevent Alekhine from winning (he had never beaten the World Champion Emanuel Lasker before his 1927 match with Capablanca), nor Fischer (who had not beaten Botvinnik, Petrosian or Spassky while they were champions). ■

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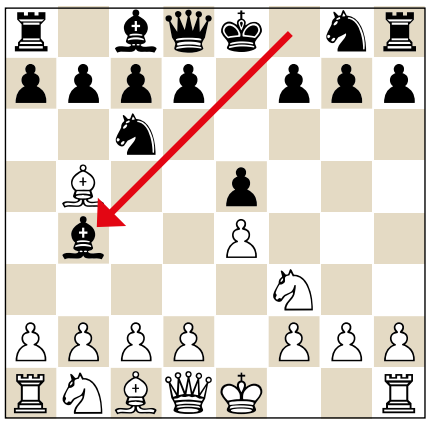
SECRETS OF OPENING SURPRISES

‘What a lousy move. Magnus thinks he can do anything.’

Jeroen Bosch

In 2014 in the blitz tournament preceding Norway Chess, Magnus Carlsen played one of his trademark off-beat opening moves. That inspired our contributor Jeroen Bosch, author of our SOS column: Secret Opening Surprises.



3...♗b4!?

The Ruy Lopez Alapin

I previously wrote about Magnus Carlsen’s SOS approach to the opening, i.e. ‘his willingness to experiment and to adopt surprising opening variations that are off the beaten track, and sometimes even downright dubious’ (NIC 2013/7). My most extreme example was the game Adams-Carlsen, Khanty-Mansiysk Olympiad 2010, which went 1.e4 g6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.e5 ♘h5 (the North Sea Defence – see NIC 2011/1). Now that is an example that is hard to top, although I experienced a feeling of *déjà vu* while watching the blitz tournament for the No Logo Norway Chess tournament. In Round 7, Carlsen, as Black, essayed the so-called Alapin Variation of the Ruy Lopez. And just as in the above case, I ruefully realized that this line had been in my SOS-file of ideas but that I had never dared to write about it, as I had judged it too dubious for words (or analysis). The present article is my personal *mea culpa*. Semyon Alapin was, after all, a noted theoretician. These days he is best remembered for his 2.c3 versus the Sicilian, but I have written two previous SOS-articles on opening ideas by Alapin: 1.e4 e5 2.♘e2?!, and the interesting 1.d4 f5 2.♕d3.

RL 1.8 – C60
Sergey Karjakin
Magnus Carlsen
Stavanger 2014 (blitz-7)

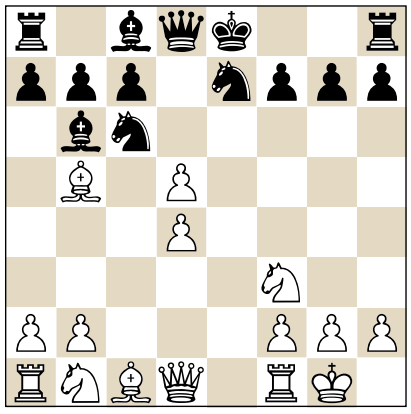
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♗b4

My esteemed fellow-columnist for this magazine, Nigel Short, almost burst out laughing during the live commentary: ‘Bishop b4. What a lousy move. Magnus thinks he can do anything. That’s a really lousy defence...’

Most theoreticians are of the same opinion, and I suspect most practical players are, too. Having said that, grandmaster Jonny Hector played Alapin’s move quite often in the 1980s and 1990s, and other grandmasters like Kholmov, Velimirovic and Sedlak have also played it more than once. If we discount the games of Alapin himself (who played his line against the top players of his time, among them ex-World Champion Steinitz in 1898), then the highest-level game in which 3...♗b4 was played must be Efim Geller versus Mark Taimanov in the famous Candidates’ Tournament of Zurich 1953. Taimanov reached an absolutely winning position but sadly lost in the end. If we are allowed to count blitz games of four minutes each and two-second increments per move, then the Alapin has now been redeemed by none other than the reigning World Champion!

So what is the point of Alapin’s crazy-looking third move? To understand the method in the madness let’s make a slight detour.

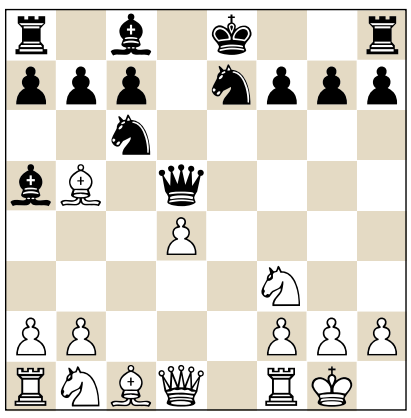
Let’s suppose that Black plays 3...♗c5 and White answers with 4.c3 ♘ge7 5.0-0 ♗b6. Now everything is ready for the central push, and after 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 the positionally desirable move is 7...d5, when 8.exd5



8...♘xd5 9.♖e1+ ♗e6 10.♗g5 (10.♗xc6+ bxc6 11.♘g5 was the reason why Alapin didn't like this line) 10...♕d6 11.♘bd2 is I suppose what you could call a fairly respectable theoretical line – it is played by grandmasters – but still one that favours White.

Instead of taking with the knight, it would be so much better if Black could take with the queen, were it not for the awkward 8...♕xd5 9.♘c3. Just suppose that in this position the black bishop was not on b6, but on a5, then you could just chop off the annoying knight now...

My source for this piece of wisdom is an article in Yearbook 19 (1991) by Dutch IM Gerard Welling, who is an ardent admirer of Alapin. The above explanation was given by Alapin in the first issue of *Deutsches Wochenschach* in 1898. So now we have our *raison d'être* for 3...♗b4, for after the consistent 4.c3 ♗a5 5.0-0 ♘ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 Black has 7...d5! 8.exd5 ♕xd5!.



and now 9.♘c3 ♗xc3! 10.♗xc6+ ♘xc6 11.bxc3 0-0 is absolutely fine for Black.

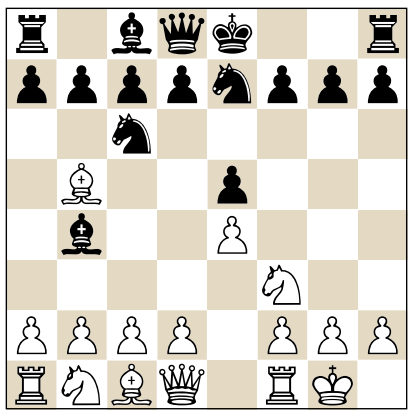
In the sixth round of the actual tournament, the two players met with the same colours. This time Carlsen did not risk 3...♗b4 but went for a Berlin Defence, and after some brief complications the game transposed to a drawish rook ending. After the game Carlsen more or less admitted that nearly the entire game(!) had been part of his pre-World Championship's match preparation. Clearly an argument in favour of 3...♗b4 !

So let's return to Carlsen's exciting choice for this blitz game, the lousy 3...♗b4 !

4.c3

The most logical move. Or as Bronstein put it in his Zurich 1953 tournament book: 'In the Evans Gambit you give a pawn to lure the bishop to b4 to win time to play c3 and d4, and here the bishop is going to that square voluntarily.'

4.0-0 is a natural move that will often transpose (almost no one can resist the temptation to play c3 with tempo): 4...♘ge7



and now:

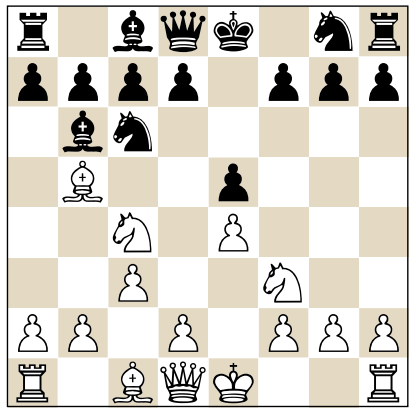
– 5.a3 ♗a5 6.b4 ♗b6 7.♗b2 d6! 8.d4 exd4 9.♘xd4 0-0 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.♗d3 ♘g6, and a draw was agreed in Stevic-Sedlak, Sibenik 2009. Black is perfectly fine.

– 5.d4 exd4 6.♘xd4 0-0 7.♗g5!? is an interesting alternative – simply ignoring the bishop on b4.

– While 5.c3 ♗a5 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.exd5 ♕xd5! is Black's main idea again.

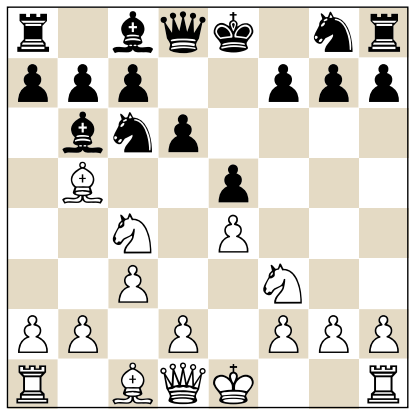
4...♗a5 5.0-0

The most popular move. During the live transmission of the game, I remembered that I had been put out by **5.♘a3!?** and that it was this move which had caused me to condemn 3...♗b4 to the file of rejected ideas. The knight is going after Black's proud bishop, and having studied this line once more I can understand my previous concern. Let's have a more detailed look: **5...♗b6 6.♘c4**, and now Black has tried several set-ups:



■ 6...f6 has been played by Kholmov, but it looks very outlandish (or Steinitzian) to me: 7.♕a4!, with the positional threat of 8.♘xb6 cxb6, looks quite strong.

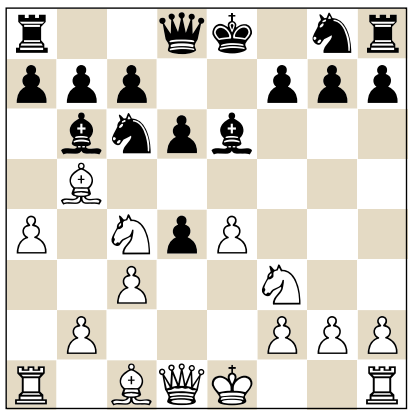
■ No fewer than 10 times did Jonny Hector now play 6...d6, but on the whole he fared quite miserably.



– Enough for a small edge is 7.a4 ♗e6 8.d3 a6 9.♘xb6 cxb6 10.♗c4 d5 11.exd5 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♕xd5 13.♗e3 b5 14.axb5 ♕xb5 15.0-0, Hartung-Nielsen-Hector, Ostend 1990.

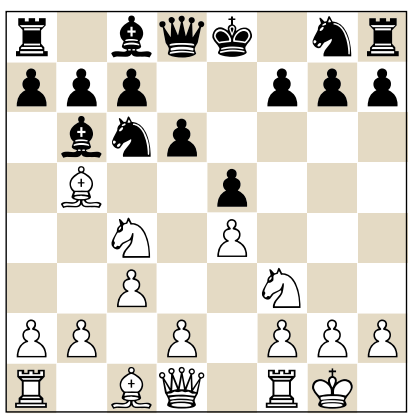
– White can play in the centre with 7.d4, when after 7...exd4 8.cxd4, 8...d5! could be a reason for playing Alapin's line. Black is perhaps still a bit worse, but he is definitely in the game. However, a sharp and dangerous move is 8.a4!? (instead of

recapturing on d4) 8...♗e6 (or 8...d5 9.♘xb6 axb6, Roiz-Hector, Alicante 1989, and now 10.♕xd4 ♘f6 11.exd5 ♕xd5 12.♕xd5 ♘xd5 13.0-0 is an unattractive endgame for Black)



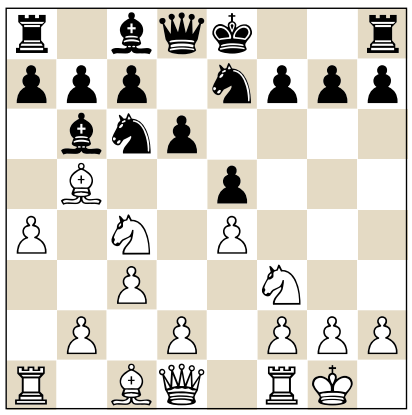
9.cxd4 d5 10.a5! dxe4 11.♘fe5 (11.axb6) 11...♗xc4 12.♘xc4 ♗xd4 13.a6! ♕f6 14.0-0, and White has a huge initiative for two pawns, Hellers-Hector, Malmö 1988.

– The natural 7.0-0 is actually hard to meet as well.



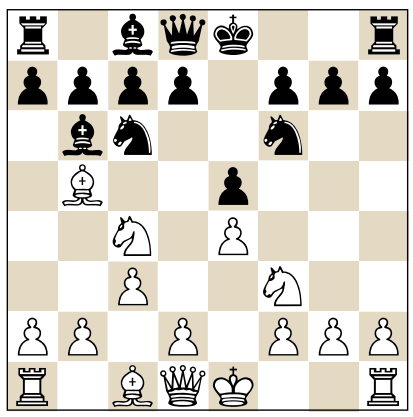
7...♘f6 8.d4 exd4 Schüssler-Lukez, Helsingborg 1990, and now 9.e5! dxe5 10.♘fxe5 0-0 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.♘xc6 bxc6 13.♗xc6 is strong.

Developing the knight to e7 won't solve Black's problems either: 7...♘e7 8.a4!, and now:



8...0-0 (8...♗e6?!, Smagin-Hector, Geneva 1990, 9.♘g5!) 9.d3! (White protects his knight and now threatens to take on c6 in order to trap the b6-bishop; 9.a5?! ♘xa5! 10.♘xa5 ♗xa5 11.♖xa5 c6; the immediate 9.♗xc6?! ♘xc6 10.a5 allows 10...♗e6!) 9...d5 (9...♗e6, Hellers-Hector, Rilton Cup 1990/91, 10.♘g5!) 10.exd5 ♕xd5 11.♖e1 ♗g4 12.h3 ♗xf3 13.♕xf3 ♕xf3 14.gxf3, and despite the doubled f-pawns Black is in trouble, Hellers-Hector, Haninge 1990.

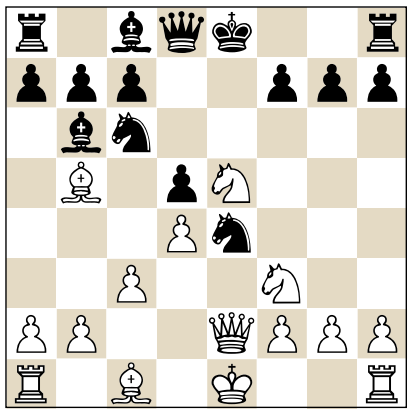
■ Next I thought that Black could perhaps hold his own with 6...♘f6, based on a game by Velimirovic:



– 7.d3 d6 (also good is 7...0-0 8.♗xc6 bxc6 9.♘cxe5 d6 10.♘c4 d5 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.e5 ♘d7 13.0-0 f6 14.e6 ♘c5 15.♘d4 ♘xe6 16.♘xc6 ♕d6 17.♘b4 c5 18.♘c2 d4, and Black had enough for the pawn in Simacek-Sedlak, Plovdiv 2012) 8.a4 a6 9.♘xb6 cxb6 10.♗c4 h6 11.h3 0-0 12.0-0 ♖e8 13.♖e1 ♗e6 and Black was OK in Barlov-Velimirovic, Tivat 1994.

– 7.♗xc6 bxc6! 8.♘fxe5 (8.♘cxe5) 8...0-0 (8...♘xe4 is a suggestion from Velimirovic) 9.d3 d5 10.♘xb6 axb6 11.0-0 dxe4 12.dxe4, Hellsten-Thoeng, Antwerp 1994, and now 12...c5! 13.f3 ♗a6 14.♕xd8 ♖axd8 15.♖e1 ♖fe8 16.♘g4 ♘xg4 17.fxg4 is only a touch better for White.

– However, the main problem is 7.d4! ♘xe4 and now 8.♕e2! (8.♘xb6 axb6 9.dxe5 d5 10.exd6 ♘xd6, Psakhis-Berkovich, Tel Aviv 1992, is less clear) 8...d5 9.♘cxe5. This is Andrew Greet's suggestion, which is awkward to meet. Alapin's bishop is out of play on b6.



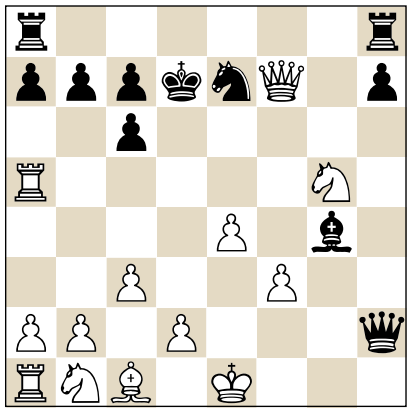
For example, 9...♕d6 10.♘c4 ♕e6 11.♘xb6 axb6 12.0-0 is a position where Black is playing for only two results (a draw or a loss).

I have devoted quite some space to 5.♘a3, mainly because I consider this to be the most critical line. After 5...♗b6 6.♘c4 none of the moves considered – 6...f6?!, 6...d6 or 6...♘f6 – are fully satisfactory. If you want to play 3...♗b4, I suggest that you first come to terms with this line.

Instead of 5.♘a3 and Karjakin's 5.0-0, there are two more moves to consider briefly:

– 5.a4 a6 6.♗c4 (6.♗xc6 bxc6 7.0-0 d6 8.d4 f6 is unclear, according to Velimirovic. I would prefer White, but the position is pretty complex) 6...♘f6 7.b4 ♗b6 8.d3 d6 9.h3 h6 10.♕b3 ♕e7 11.♗a3, Marjanovic-Velimirovic, Titograd 1984, and now 11...♘h5! is strong.

– 5.♗xc6!? dxc6 6.♘xe5 ♕g5 (6...♕e7 7.d4 f6 is safer) 7.♘f3 (7.d4 ♕xg2 8.♕f3 ♕xf3 9.♘xf3 is slightly better for White, according to Keres and Geller, but it doesn't look all that shocking) 7...♕xg2 8.♖g1 ♕h3 9.♖xg7 ♘e7 10.♖g3 ♕h5 11.♖g5 (11.d4 ♖g8 12.♗g5!) 11...♕h3 12.♖xa5 (White can repeat with 12.♖g3, but who could resist taking the bishop along the fifth rank?) 12...♗g4 13.♘g5 ♕h4! 14.♕b3 ♕xh2! 15.♕xf7+?! (Black has a dangerous attack after 15.f3 ♕h1+ 16.♔e2 0-0-0!) 15...♔d7 16.f3? (16.♕c4 ♖hf8 17.♕f1 ♖xf2! 18.♕xf2 ♕h1+ 19.♕f1 ♕h4+ is a perpetual)

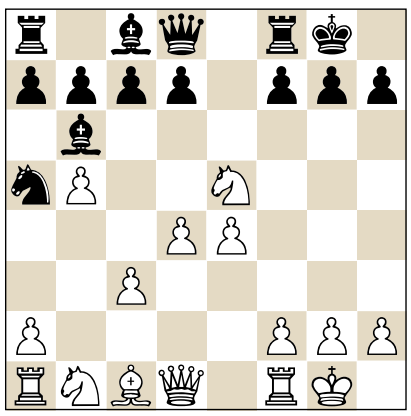


16...♖af8? (returning the favour; 16...♕h1+! 17.♔e2 ♖af8 wins) 17.♕c4 ♖xf3! 18.♕d4+! ♔e8 19.♘xf3! (19.♕xh8+? ♖f8 and mates) 19...♗xf3 20.♕f2 ♕h1+, and it all ends in perpetual check, Harmonist-Alapin, Berlin 1898. A fantastic game!

5...♘ge7 6.d4

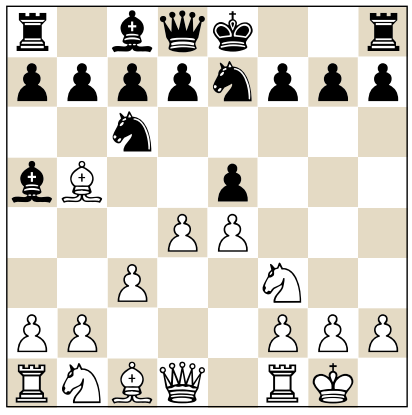
6.♘a3 is far less dangerous than on the previous move: 6...0-0 7.♘c4 d5! 8.♘xa5 ♘xa5 9.♘xe5 dxe4 10.d4 f6 11.♘g4, Balogh-Sedlak, Hungary 2011, and now with 11...c5! Black could have taken advantage of the knight's vulnerable position on g4. The game is equal after 12.♘e3 cxd4 13.cxd4 a6 14.♗e2 ♗e6.

White can in fact win a pawn by force, and this is exactly what Geller did in his famous game against Taimanov mentioned in the introduction: 6.♗xc6 ♘xc6 7.b4 ♗b6 8.b5 ♘a5 9.♘xe5 0-0 10.d4.



Black obtains pretty good compensation for the pawn with 10...♕e8! (Taimanov played 10...d5?!, and after 11.♗a3 – Levenfish's suggestion of 11.♘d2 was strong – 11...♖e8 12.♕h5 f6 Geller sacrificed a piece with 13.f4, but after 13...fxe5 14.fxe5 ♗e6 15.♘d2 dxe4 16.♘xe4 ♗xd4+! Black was considerably better, although he later tragically lost, Geller-Taimanov, Zurich 1953) 11.♘d2 (11.♕d3 f5! 12.♕g3 ♔h8 13.exf5 d6 14.♘f3 ♕xb5 15.♗e3 ♗xf5 was much better for Black in Schlechter-Alapin, Berlin 1897) 11...f5!? 12.♘ec4 fxe4 13.♘e3, Anand-Hector, Palma de Mallorca 1989, and now 13...d6 is about equal.

After 6.d4 Black is able to implement his main idea.



6...exd4 7.cxd4 d5 8.e5

8.exd5 ♕xd5! is the whole point of Alapin's 3...♗b4 as explained above. In practice, White has now prepared ♘c3, but he has been unable to prove anything:

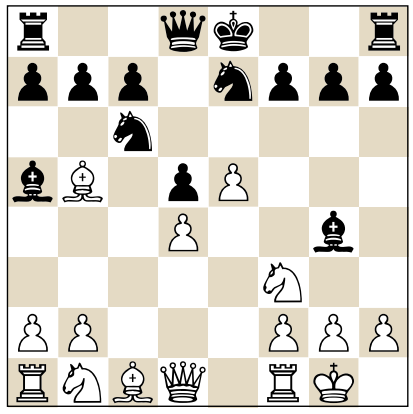
– 9.♕a4 0-0 10.♘c3 ♕h5 11.♗g5, Lupu-Hector, Val Maubuee 1990, and now 11...♗xc3! 12.bxc3 ♗g4 13.♗xe7 ♗xf3! 14.♗xc6 ♗xc6 15.♕d1 ♕d5 leaves Black slightly better.

– 9.♗e2 ♗e6 10.♘c3 ♕d7 11.♘e4 ♗b6 12.♘c5 ♗xc5 13.dxc5 ♗d5 14.♗f4 0-0-0 15.♕a4 and after 15...♗xf3! 16.♗xf3 ♕d4! 17.♗xc6 (17.♕xd4 ♘xd4 18.♗d1, and the knights are no worse than the two bishops) 17...♘xc6 18.♕xd4 ♘xd4 – the endgame favoured Black in Ali Marandi-Sedlak, Plovdiv 2012.

8...♗g4!?

In the commentary box, Short noted that 'Magnus has a perfectly decent position'. Indeed, we may conclude that the whole set-up with 4.c3 ♗a5 5.0-0 ♘ge7 6.d4 exd4 7.cxd4 d5 is not the critical test of 3...♗b4.

Equally playable is 8...0-0 9.♗g5 h6 10.♗xc6?! (10.♗xe7 ♘xe7 is equal) 10...hxg5! 11.♗a4, Peschardt-Welling, Lyngby 1991, and now 11...g4!, and Black is to be preferred.



9.h3 ♗h5

Objectively stronger is the time-saving 9...♗xf3 10.♕xf3 0-0, which equalizes. Pawn d4 is hanging, and Black subsequently plays ...f6.

10.♘c3

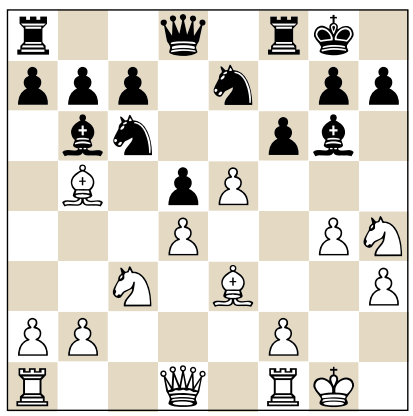
Karjakin could have taken advantage of Black's 9th move with 10.♗g5 0-0 11.♗xc6 bxc6 12.♕a4! (12.♘bd2 ♖b8 13.♘b3 ♗b6 14.♖c1 a5 15.♗xe7 was agreed drawn in Köller-Maric, Germany 1989. After 15...♕xe7 16.♖xc6 a4 17.♘bd2 ♕b4 Black has sufficient compensation) 12...♗b6 13.♘bd2.

10...0-0 11.g4

The pin was annoying. If 11.♗e3 then 11...f6 or 11...♘f5.

11...♗g6 12.♘h4 ♗b6 13.♗e3 f6!?

13...♘xe5 14.dxe5 d4 15.♗g5 c6 16.♘xg6 hxg6 17.♗c4 dxc3 18.bxc3 is certainly easier to play for White.



14.exf6 ♖xf6 15.♘xg6!?

Karjakin refuses the offer of an exchange:

– 15.♗g5 ♘xd4! 16.♗xf6 gxf6, and Black has sufficient compensation – and even more in a blitz game!
– 15.♗xc6 ♘xc6 16.♗g5 ♘xd4 17.♘xg6 hxg6 18.♗xf6 gxf6 is also decent enough.

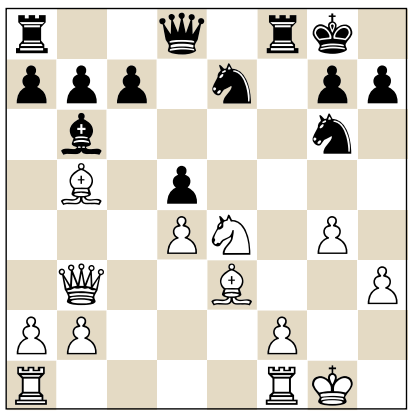
15...♘xg6 16.♕b3 ♘ce7?!

The position is highly complex for a blitz game. This is perhaps not the most accurate move, although it works out well in the game. 16...♖d6 was good, as is 16...♔h8, in view of 17.♘xd5?? (17.♕xd5 ♖d6; 17.♖ad1 ♘ce7) 17...♘a5.

17.♘e4 17.f4 is a touch better for White.

17...♖f8

17...♖f3 18.♘g5 ♖f6 is a decent alternative.



18.f4

Now if 18.♘g5 then Black has 18...c6! (18...♕d6 19.♘e4 ♕d8 repeats; 18...♖f6 19.f4, and White is slightly better), when 19.♘e6? (19.♗d3 ♕d6) fails because of 19...♕d6 20.♘xf8 ♖xf8 21.♗e2 ♗c7, forcing White to play 22.f4 ♘xf4 23.♗xf4 ♖xf4 24.♖xf4 ♕xf4, when the attack goes on after 25.♖d1 ♘g6!.

18...c6 19.♗d3 ♔h8

So far both players have played very well, but from here on in the lack of time becomes an issue.

20.♘c5?!

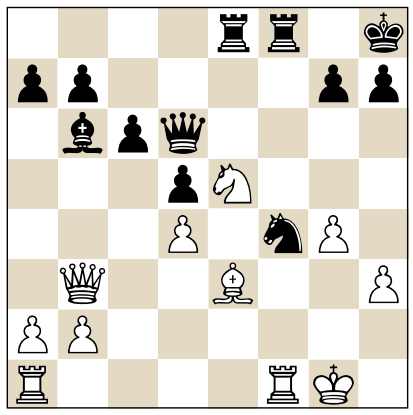
20.♘g3 ♕d6 21.♘e2 ♖ae8 is about equal.

20...♕d6 Now White is in trouble. The f-pawn is hanging and his king looks a little loose.

21.♗xg6?!

21.♘xb7 ♕c7 22.♗xg6 ♘xg6 23.♘c5 ♗xc5 24.dxc5 ♘xf4, and Black is slightly better.

21...♘xg6 22.♘d3 ♖ae8 23.♘e5 ♘xf4!



Karjakin must have missed that one; now Black has a clear edge.

24.♔h1?

24.♖xf4 ♖xf4 25.♗xf4 ♗xd4+ 26.♔g2 was a better chance, as 26...♕f6! is difficult to find in a blitz game (the natural 26...♗xe5 is met by 27.♖e1 and because of the pin White is OK).

24...♘g6!

And now Magnus is winning, but with time running out anything can happen in such a complex position. The clock times were 1.17 versus 35 seconds.

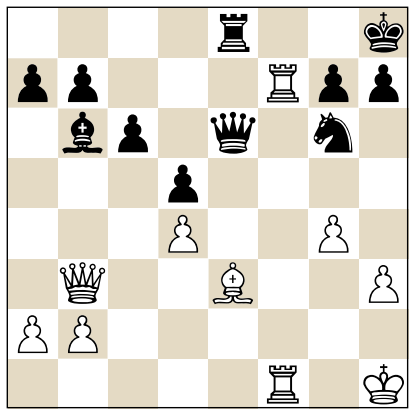
25.♘f7+

Although this is losing, it is the only decent try. At least White gets an exchange for all his (king) trouble.

25...♖xf7 26.♖xf7 ♕e6?

And Karjakin is rewarded. This double attack fails because of Black's weak back rank. Correct was 26...♗c7!, when the threat of mate forces White to return the exchange, and after 27.♖xc7 (27.♗g1 ♖e2 is worse) 27...♕xc7 Black is easily winning.

27.♖af1!



27...h5?! Magnus goes all out. 27...♕e4+ 28.♔h2 ♔g8 would have kept the balance.

28.♗g1! hxg4 29.♕g3 gxh3 30.♖xb7 ♔g8?! 31.♖ff7 31.♖f4!.

31...♕e4+?!

31...♕xf7 32.♖xf7 ♔xf7, and Black should be able to hold. The same goes for 31...♗xd4 32.♗xd4 ♕e4+ 33.♔h2 ♕xd4 34.♖xg7+ ♕xg7 35.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 36.♕c7+ ♖e7 37.♕xc6 ♘f4.

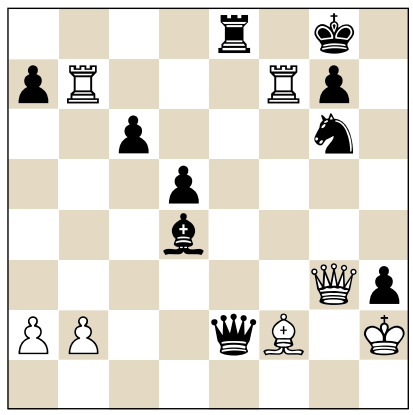
32.♔h2 White could have gone for a better endgame with 32.♕f3 ♕xf3+ 33.♖xf3.

32...♕e2+?

Objectively Black again had to play for a fortress: 32...♗xd4! 33.♗xd4 ♕xd4 34.♖xg7+ ♕xg7 35.♖xg7+ ♔xg7 36.♕c7+ ♖e7 37.♕xc6.

33.♗f2! 33.♔xh3? ♕h5+ 34.♔g2 ♘h4+ wins for Black.

33...♗xd4



Here Magnus's clock showed that he had just three seconds left. Karjakin now had 22 seconds to find the only winning move.

34.♔xh3

And while executing this losing move, Karjakin lost on time!
Instead of his final move, 34.♕xg6 was completely winning. After the text the roles have been reversed again: 34.♔xh3 ♕h5+ 35.♔g2 ♖e2!, and wins.

A very exciting blitz game and an extraordinary opening variation. We have seen that Black's 3...♗b4 certainly has its points. Black comfortably equalizes against the set-up chosen by Karjakin. In my opinion, Black's main worry is 5.♘a3. ■

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